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An analysis of parental involvement, least restrictive environments, and preparation of personnel in ECSE classrooms

Debara Sue Forest
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**An analysis of parental involvement, least restrictive
environments, and preparation of personnel in ECSE classrooms**

Forest, Debara Sue, Ph.D.

Iowa State University, 1990

U·M·I

**300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

**An analysis of parental involvement, least restrictive
environments, and preparation of personnel
in ECSE classrooms**

by

Debara Sue Forest

**A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Major: Child Development

Approved:

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For the Graduate College

**Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa**

1990

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ABSTRACT

An analysis of parental involvement, least restrictive environments, and preparation of personnel in ECSE classrooms.

A 100% response was achieved (N=106) on a questionnaire sent to educators in public school early childhood education classrooms in South Dakota. Analysis of the background/Certification is significantly related to twenty of a possible thirty-one opportunities available for parental involvement. There is a relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and curriculum utilization. The opportunities for children with special needs to interact with children, who are typically developing, show a significant relationship to the educational background/certification of the educator. Opportunities for parental involvement increases the likelihood that there will be opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children. There is a significant relationship between the utilization of a curriculum and opportunities available for interaction with typical children. Programs with specified curriculum are more likely to have opportunities for parental involvement. Five contextual factors are significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement. Towns with greater than 50,000 are more likely to use curriculums. There is not a significant relationship between any of the contextual factors and opportunities available for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the number of early intervention programs serving infants and preschool children with special needs has grown tremendously. Several factors have contributed to this growth. Evidence of the critical importance of the first five years of life has been mounting steadily for the past twenty years. Empirical research findings, demonstrating the effects of early experience on animals (Harlow, 1974; Lorenz, 1971), have been utilized as the foundation for inferences regarding the importance of the early childhood years to human infants. Research has verified that the early formative years are the most important as the initial period of development in a child's life. Bloom (1964), Erickson (1950), Gesell (1940), Piaget (1952), and White (1975) have emphasized that the first five or six years are periods of highest potential in social/emotional, cognitive, linguistic, physical, and perceptual growth and development. Research has also contributed to our understanding of the interactive nature of the developmental areas.

The periods of rapid growth and development have been shown to be even more crucial for the child who has a special need (Lerner, Mardell-Czudnowski, & Goldenberg, 1981). Bloom (1964) and Bruner (1974) have noted that failure to provide remedial programs for children who have special needs, or for children who are disadvantaged in their early years, resulted in developmental deficits that were cumulative in nature. Researchers have also reported that when intervention programs were not available, many at-risk and disadvantaged infants eventually became classified as children with special needs (Gottlieb, 1978; Hunt, 1979).

The push for developing facilities and programs for children with special needs began during the Kennedy Administration with the passage of PL 88-164 (the Facilities for the Mentally Retarded Act), and continued through the establishment of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now the Office of Special Education Programs) and the passage of the Handicapped Children's Early Education Act (PL 90-538). Public Law 90-538 established experimental programs to serve as models to demonstrate and disseminate exemplary practices and materials for working with young children's special needs (Linder, 1983).

Equal rights for individuals with special needs are guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112). This act requires that any state that offers services to children without special needs must also offer services to children with special needs.

Equal rights for individuals with special needs and the rights of children with special needs to equal services enabled children with special needs to be included in Head Start. Head Start (established in 1964) is required by the Head Start, Economic Opportunity, and Community Partnership Act of 1974 (PL 93-644) to have at least 10% of their enrollment slots filled by children with special needs (Linder, 1983).

Services for the children with special needs were increased and further strengthened with the Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1974 (EHA 93-380), which mandated that each state establish a goal for servicing all children birth to 21 years of age with special needs (Linder, 1983). The time table for meeting this goal was to be included in the state plan submitted to the Bureau of

Education for the Handicapped (now termed Special Education Programs). These amendments (EHA 93-380) also required the establishment of "child find" efforts for children with special needs from birth to 21 years of age. Young children were to be identified, and the service system was required to have information on the number of children involved, even if they were not served, in each age range for future planning.

In 1975, more legislation was passed and definitions of handicapping conditions were broadened. Public Law 94-142, signed in 1975, mandated a free appropriate public education for all children 3 through 18 years of age with special needs residing within a state by 1978, and for all children 3 to 21 years of age residing within a state by 1980. Preschool Incentive Grants were established by Section 619 of the law to stimulate the states to develop services for children 3 through 5 years of age with special needs (Linder, 1983). Public Law 94-142, while it was landmark legislation, left several gaping loopholes that enabled states to avoid serving preschool children with special needs if the requirements were inconsistent with state law or practice, or the order of any court (Ballard, Ramirez, & Zantal-Weiner, 1987).

In order to entice a larger number of states to lower the minimum age of their mandates to birth, Public Law 98-199 was passed in 1983. This law, which amended PL 94-142, allocated monies through grants, which were made available to each state through the state educational agency or any other responsible state agency. The monies were to assist states in planning, developing, and/or

implementing an Early Childhood State Plan for the comprehensive delivery of special education services.

Even though PL 98-199 provided monetary incentives through a grant program to the states, it did not provide a means to enforce states to provide services to all children 3 through 5 years of age; nor did it specifically enforce states to address services to at-risk and/or handicapped children from birth through 2 years of age. The amendment also failed to direct attention to the importance of the total family in the service delivery system.

Due to the inadequacies of PL 98-199 and other previous public laws, Public Law 99-457 was signed on October 8, 1986. This law has two main areas of emphasis: (1) requirements for the Part H discretionary program to serve infants and toddlers with special needs (birth through 2 years of age), and their families, and (2) revision of the pre-school (children 3 through 5 years of age) grant program (P. L. 99-457, 1986). The states will be reimbursed based upon: the relative number of children with special needs, birth through 2 years of age, being served in the state; and the number of children with special needs, 3 through 5 years of age, being served in the state; and the state's progress towards a comprehensive statewide service delivery system. States will also receive a bonus for increasing the number of children with special needs served in special education programs in the 3 through 5 age category.

All rights and protections of PL 94-142 (EHA - Part B) are extended to children with special needs 3 through 5 years of age in school year 1990-91 (Ballard, Ramirez, & Zantal-Weiner, 1987) under PL 99-457. There will be an

increase in the federal fiscal contribution for this age group if programs comply and give assurances that they are providing a free appropriate public education to all children 3 through 5 years of age with special needs by the year 1990-1991 (P. L. 99-457, 1986). Family services are to play an important role in the preschool programs. The preschooler's individualized education program (IEP) must include instruction for parents, whenever it is appropriate and desired by parents.

Public awareness, federal legislation, and federal funding have paved the way and fashioned the legislation, programs, and services available to children ages birth through 5 with special needs and their families throughout the country. South Dakota has responded to the federal initiatives by developing state definitions and standards.

In 1972, the State Legislature in South Dakota passed a law (SDCL 13-37-1), that stated "Exceptional Children" means all children under the age of 21 who are residents of the State of South Dakota and who, because of their physical or mental conditions, are not adequately provided for through the usual facilities and services of the public schools. The law also stated that all public schools must provide "appropriate educational services" for all children with special needs who are under 21 years of age (SDCL 13-14-1). Through this legislation, and with the support of PL 94-142, all children with special needs (birth through 21 years of age) in South Dakota are entitled to receive appropriate educational services. Preschool children are included in this legislation, as determined by an Attorney General's Opinion (AG 73-30). This opinion interpreted the State Law (SDCL 13-37-1) to

mean mandatory public school educational opportunities for children who have special needs with no minimum age limit.

Due to the ruralness of the state, and the small size of a number of school districts ($\underline{N} = 196$), the 1979 legislature passed SDCL 13-37-14.2, which enabled local school districts to form entities within the state for the purpose of sharing financial and staffing resources to provide special education. These public school entities are known as special education cooperatives ($\underline{N} = 13$). The cooperatives may be a single district, or a combination of several school districts sharing special education services. The local school districts receive reimbursement from the state and federal governments for their efforts to provide instructional programs in special education. The federal government, under PL 94-142, provides aid to local school districts based on an unduplicated count of the children with special needs that the local schools have enrolled in their special education program. The State of South Dakota reimburses the local school districts 50% of the allowable costs expended by the local district for the operation of their special education program.

There are several important program aspects to consider when describing the early childhood special education services provided to children birth through 5 years of age and their families in South Dakota. They include categorization of children served, certification and in-service training of direct service and supervisory personnel, and the quality of the programs and services available.

The categories of children being served in the early childhood special education programs is the first program aspect to be considered. Currently, early childhood special education programs service children birth through 5 years of age

in need of prolonged assistance and children 3 to 5 years of age in need of special assistance. A child determined to be on prolonged assistance (State Statute 24:05:10:04.01) must: present little or no communication; present significant delayed physical and motor development; display severe deficits in self-help skills; display infrequent constructive behavior; or be a child who is seriously emotionally disturbed. A child, who is in need of special assistance, is a child who has mild to moderate special needs or is a gifted child unable to achieve his/her expected potential in the regular school environment without special education services. It has been left up to local South Dakota school districts to decide who is eligible for special education instruction and services in their districts.

Certification and in-service training of direct service and supervisory personnel is the second program aspect to be discussed. South Dakota does not have certification in early childhood special education. Currently, educators holding a degree in special education (i.e., general special education or education of the severe and profound) are certified to teach in the early childhood special education programs and classrooms. Both general special education and education of the severe and profound certificates are rated for children with special needs in kindergarten through grade eight. Educators holding certification in early childhood education are not certified to teach in the early childhood special education classrooms. Districts can hire educators with early childhood certificates only if they obtain an "Authority to Act" from the Division for Teacher Certification. The hiring of the personnel to work in the early childhood special education classroom is determined by the local school district. No data have been collected on the

educational backgrounds or experiences of the educators in the public school early childhood special education programs in South Dakota.

In South Dakota, no certification or experience in special education is necessary for the individuals supervising special education programs, including the early childhood special education programs. However, individuals can receive endorsement as Directors of Special Education in South Dakota. In order to receive the endorsement, individuals are required to have an elementary or secondary certificate with a special education endorsement, 3 years teaching experience including 1 year in special education, and an approved program for Special Education Directors. Individual school districts are allowed to determine the qualifications of those who will supervise the special education programs.

School districts providing special education services, including early childhood special education in South Dakota, are required to provide staff development. Although staff development is required, there are no set number of hours that must be provided in the districts. The in-services that are provided are determined by a four-step process: all special education teachers in the district fill out a needs questionnaire to find out the areas of interest; next the needs of the educators are prioritized; then specific in-services are planned around the particular areas of need; and finally, the staff persons are responsible for evaluating the in-services.

The third program aspect to be discussed is the quality of the programs and services that are available for children, birth through 5 years of age, with special needs and their families. Programs in South Dakota are evaluated only on their ability to meet state and federal rules and regulations. The quality of the early

childhood special education programs, in terms of the curriculum, family involvement, and a least restrictive environment, is not currently being evaluated. Furthermore, early childhood special education programs in South Dakota are not required by state or federal law to have specific written criteria for their programs.

Developing early childhood special education services in rural and sparsely populated areas is a very challenging task. As more children, birth through five years of age, are mandated to be served under PL 99-457, administrators and special educators in South Dakota will be called upon to help set up and administer these programs, as well as to continue to coordinate resources for the families currently served in existing programs. It is imperative that the effective early intervention programs are established. In order to determine if programs are effective, it is necessary to review the literature and to determine what contributes to effective programming in early childhood special education.

Most of the early intervention research has been directed at two major groups of children: those at environmental risk due to social/cultural deprivation and those who are, or who may be, biologically impaired. It has been only in the last several years that researchers have begun to comprehensively review the impact of early intervention on children with special needs. Evaluating early intervention for young children with special needs is difficult for several reasons: (1) it is difficult to have control groups, because it is unethical to withhold intervention from one group of children with special needs while giving it to another; (2) there is very little consistency between programs in providing the same levels of the same intervention

to the same types of children; and (3) it is difficult to compare across different types of special needs conditions (Bailey & Wolery, 1984).

Synthesizing research dealing with the effectiveness of early intervention is challenging. Recently, a number of researchers have conducted in-depth reviews of early intervention efficacy literature to draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of early intervention (Bronfenbrenner, 1975; Denhoff, 1981; Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987; Simeonsson, Cooper & Scheiner, 1982; and White & Casto, 1985). For various reasons contradictory conclusions were reached as to what was and what was not effective. For instance, there are a limited number of studies meeting minimal criteria for acceptable research (Dunst & Rheingrover, 1981; Simeonsson, Cooper & Scheiner, 1982; and White & Casto, 1985). Secondly, the size of sample in many studies was very limited. Therefore, it was very difficult to obtain statistical significance (White & Casto, 1985). A third reason was the fact that children in the studies made progress, but not in the domains that were measured by the dependent variables (Bailey & Wolery, 1984; Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987). Bricker (1978) also emphasized that the concept of effectiveness of early intervention has been a difficult concept to define operationally due to the variability of criteria for success.

Even with the difficulties noted above, several pertinent findings relating to the effectiveness of early intervention have been reported. Bricker and Sheehan (1981), Kirk (1958), McNulty, Smith and Soper (1983), Roos (1974), and Skeels and Dye (1939) have all cited research evidence that supports the contention that early

intervention enables a child with special needs to have a significantly better chance of reaching his/her maximum potential.

Simeonsson, Cooper and Scheiner (1982) performed meta-analysis on 27 studies that involved biologically impaired children. They reported that 48% of the studies yielded statistical evidence for effectiveness of intervention. They stated that the effectiveness percentage may have been an underestimation because children with special needs in all of the studies made progress, but it was difficult to obtain statistical significance because of the limited sample sizes.

Investigators have not only looked at meta-analysis findings, they have also looked in depth at the specific factors that influence effectiveness. Investigators have reported that a number of different factors have influenced whether or not programs are effective (Broffenbrenner, 1975; Guralnick, 1978; McCollum & Thorp, 1988; Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987). They included: (1) preparation of personnel; (2) family involvement; (3) type of curriculum utilization; and (4) locus of service delivery. For the purpose of this study, the investigator will look at each factor and the relationship between them.

The first factor reported to influence the effectiveness of early childhood special education programs was the preparation of the personnel involved in the programs. Early childhood special education has its roots in both early childhood education and special education (McCollum, 1988). Even though the two fields have some overlapping areas, Peterson (1987) stated that early childhood special education is a field unto itself, and it is not an extension of either early childhood education or special education. The professional in the early childhood special

education classroom needs to have skills and knowledge across both disciplines (McCollum & Thorp, 1988). The early childhood special educator must have an understanding of the child, the special needs of the child, and the environments in which development occurs (McCollum, 1988).

There is very little in what we do in teacher education in early childhood special education that is supported by research (McCollum & McCartan, 1988). Good teacher education research in the area of early childhood special education is difficult to do. Variables are difficult to control, criteria for program services are unclear, and programs vary in many ways (Bricker & Slentz, 1989). Early childhood special education is a relatively new area; therefore there is a small research base. In terms of research of teaching, early childhood special education is oriented towards a very specific population that differs in many aspects from the studies that have been the focus of this type of research in the past. According to McCollom and McCartan (1988), there are a number of factors to consider in regard to teacher education in the area of early childhood special education: (1) students should not only learn about the process and content of the program but also the interactions between content, process, characteristics of students and faculty, and the boundaries of the programs in relation to the contexts in which they function; (2) programs should present students with varied approaches and models, providing them with opportunities that require them to use a wide range of knowledge, to evaluate intervention effectiveness, to generate hypotheses, to learn techniques for effective searching and synthesis, and to use available literature; and

(3) early childhood special education students should learn how to socialize and value mutually supportive professional relationships.

The second factor reported to influence the effectiveness of early intervention programs is opportunities for parental involvement. Linder (1983) cites the following as benefits of active parental involvement in early intervention programs: (1) enables the parents to create a more optimal learning environment in the home; (2) enables parents to attain greater self-confidence and the ability to solve problems relating to their own personal growth and that of their child with special needs, when they are provided with opportunities that give support and encouragement in coping effectively with their child with special needs; (3) involves parents in planning, implementing, and evaluating their child's program enables greater continuity and coordination of learning between home and school; (4) provides the parents of children with special needs with information enables them to improve their interactions with their child; (5) provides resource and service delivery information that enables parents to become aware of and use existing community services and resources; (6) addresses parental needs and concerns; (7) provides needed human resources to expand the quantity and quality of services offered; and (8) builds community support for early intervention programs and services, and parents become program advocates and liaisons to other organizations and groups.

In his review of early intervention studies, Bronfenbrenner (1975) reported that active opportunities for involvement of parents in a child's early intervention program was a critical factor in the success of the early intervention programs.

Without parental involvement, the positive effects of early intervention seemed to decline. The main area of decline was cognitive development. Parents who regularly participated in the early intervention programs were able to conduct follow-through efforts at home. Active parental involvement in early intervention programs implies shared responsibility for the child's developmental progress. It enables parents to discover their strengths, potentialities, and talents. A variety of model early childhood special education programs have shown that early intervention was critical not only to the progress of the child but also had a significant effect on maintaining the family (Bricker, 1978).

The amount of parental involvement is the third factor that has been reported to influence the effectiveness of early childhood special education programs (Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987). They evaluated 31 selected studies that researched the impact of early intervention on children less than 3 years of age with special needs and their families. Analysis of the programs revealed that planned, extensive parental involvement showed significantly greater effects than those with little or no planned parental participation. A second finding revealed that the most effective model of early intervention was one that focused the intervention on the child and parent together.

The type of curriculum utilized in the early childhood special education programs is the fourth factor reported to influence the effectiveness of early intervention programs. Meta-analysis demonstrated that programs with well-defined curricula evidenced significantly greater child effects than those utilizing a less structured approach (Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987). According to Linder (1983),

the curriculum should focus on: (1) developmental areas including gross and fine motor skills, expressive and receptive language, cognitive or adaptive reasoning, and social-emotional behavior; (2) specific skill areas including self-help skills, pre-reading, and pre-math skills, sensory skills, and communication skills; and (3) enrichment activities including art, music, and dance. Linder (1983) also reported that it is imperative that each of these areas are represented in the curriculum in an early childhood special education program. She reported that emphasis on one curriculum area may result in an unbalanced program, which may fail to totally meet each child's individual special needs.

The final factor reported to influence the effectiveness of early childhood special education programs was the availability of opportunities for the children with special needs to be involved with children without special needs. Public Law 94-142 mandates that placement take into consideration the concept of the least restrictive environment. In terms of the law, the more the placement includes children without special needs, the less restrictive that environment is considered.

Recent studies indicate that the process of developing opportunities for least restrictive environments is very arduous. In order for least restrictive environments to be effective, it was reported that educators needed to plan and facilitate social interaction, teach imitation and reward modeling, and ensure a smooth transition between programs (Allen, 1980). Guralnick (1976) reported that integration prevented some of the deleterious effects that resulted from separation, and it had an independent positive effect on the children with special needs. The children without special needs served as valuable resources by providing instruction, applying

adaptive consequences, or modeling appropriate social, play, and communicative behaviors (Guralnick, 1978). Guralnick (1978) also reported that when settings were changed from segregated to integrated, the children with special needs evidenced fewer inappropriate behaviors and the social, play, and linguistic environments were richer in quality. Teacher attitudes (Philip & Vandivier, 1981), personnel preparation (Dickerson & Davis, 1979), and parental involvement (Wynne, Brown, Dakof, & Ulfelder, 1975) were also critical variables that influenced the effectiveness of least restrictive environments.

Safford and Rosen (1981) stated that the integration of children, with and without special needs, provided the children with special needs experiences that enabled them to have a chance to realize maximum potential. According to Wolfensburg (1972), environments that were void of children without special needs provided culturally abnormal situations, and did not enable children with special needs to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors which were culturally normative.

In summary, research has shown that early childhood special education programs are effective. It has been shown that the most effective programs have considerable parental involvement, well defined curriculums, personnel with professional training that reflected current research and the best practices, and environments that provided opportunities for involvement with children without special needs.

The purpose of this investigation is to look in depth at early childhood special education programs in South Dakota, and to investigate the relationships between

educational backgrounds of the educators, opportunities for parental involvement, opportunities to interact with typically developing children, and curricula utilization. The specific research questions that will be investigated in the public school early childhood special education programs include:

1. Is there a relationship between the educational background/Certification of the educator and opportunities for parental involvement?
2. Is there a relationship between the educational background/Certification of the educator and the type of curriculum utilized in the program?
3. Is there a relationship between the educational background/Certification of the educator and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children?
4. Is there a relationship between the opportunities for parental involvement and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children?
5. Is there a relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities available for involvement with typical children?
6. Is there a relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities for parental involvement?
7. Is there a relationship between contextual factors and opportunities for parental involvement?
8. Is there a relationship between contextual factors and the type of curriculum utilized in the program?
9. Is there a relationship between contextual factors and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children?

DEFINITIONS

Educational background refers to the specific first degree and first specialty for the first degree, and/or second degree and first specialty for the second degree, and/or third degree and first specialty for the third degree.

Certification refers to the current South Dakota State Teaching Certificates that the classroom educators hold.

Opportunities for parental involvement include any activities in which the primary caretakers for the children with special needs have direct involvement or input into the program.

Type of curriculum refers to whether the curriculum is teacher designed, commercial, district/cooperative designed, and/or state designed.

Opportunities available for interaction with typical children refers to any situation in which children with special needs come into contact with other children of the same age and/or developmental level without special needs.

Contextual factors include the location of the district, the size of the district, the total number of children with special needs in the birth through age five early childhood special education classrooms, location of the classrooms, training of the supervisors, whether the early childhood special education is a cooperative or a district-run program, the amount of release time educators have for parental contacts, and the setting in which the programs are located (e.g., center-based individual, center-based group, home-based, or a combination of home- and center-based).

Curriculum - "Systematic procedures for organizing educational activities: the procedures include both the content (what to teach) and method (how to teach)" (Lillie, 1975, p. 2).

CAT-MOD - Procedure that fits linear models to functions of categorical data, facilitating such analyses as analysis of variance, linear modeling, log-linear modeling, logistic regression, and repeated measure analysis (SAS, 1985).

Cooperative - A grouping of several public school districts that receive special education programming and related services from a centralized location. The cooperative director hires the personnel and sends them to the local schools in that cooperative to provide special education and related services.

Speech/Language Educators - Individuals with Speech/Language degrees who are in charge of a public school early child special education classroom.

Respite care - Individuals who provide child care to families who have children with special needs so that the parent(s) are able to have time away from the care of their child(ren) with special needs. The cost to families is generally based on ability to pay. In a majority of the communities this program is operated by community individuals.

Early Childhood Special Education Program - The South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, Section for Special Education Administrator's Survey revealed that the typical program is a one-half day public school program offered one to five days a week for children birth through five years of age with special needs.

METHODS

Subjects

There are a total of 196 public school districts in South Dakota. After approval was obtained from the Human Subjects Committee (see Appendix A), each of the public school districts received enough early childhood special educator's questionnaires for the number of early childhood special education teachers providing direct service to children, birth through 5 years of age with special needs, and their families. In the 196 public school districts, there was total of 106 educators in charge of early childhood special education programs.

Pilot

A questionnaire containing potential research questions was sent to a total of 25 persons, who are actively involved and familiar with early childhood special education, in Iowa. Feedback was requested from each of the participants on the clarity of questions, question format, questionnaire format, questionnaire length, and recommendations for change. The results of the feedback were analyzed and questions were added, deleted, or revised according to recommendations from pilot subjects. They were also reviewed for clarity and relevance by a survey specialist, by staff in the South Dakota Division of Education, Section for Special Education, and by early childhood education professionals at Iowa State University prior to dissemination.

Procedures

After approval of the questionnaire was received from the Division of Education, Section for Special Education, the superintendent of each school district received a letter from the Section for Special Education (see Appendix B). The letter described the project and requested that each early childhood special education teacher in the district complete the questionnaire and send it back to the researcher within two weeks after receiving the questionnaire.

Two weeks after the letter had been received by the school district, a package containing a cover letter (see Appendix C), a questionnaire (see Appendix D), and a pre-addressed, stamped manilla envelope for the questionnaire's return were sent to each of the 106 public school early childhood special education direct service teachers.

Each of the questionnaires had an identification number, available only to the researcher. The identification number was used to follow up on respondents for clarification of responses which were difficult to code, to send reminders to those who failed to respond, or to get answers to questions that were left blank.

Letters were sent to each educator who had not responded ($n = 35$) within the two-week time period (see Appendix E). The letters thanked the educators who had returned their questionnaires, and reminded educators who had not returned them to do so as soon as possible.

Two weeks after the reminder letters had been sent ($n = 35$), educators still not responding were called ($n = 7$) by the researcher inquiring if they had received a questionnaire and/or if they had questions concerning completing the

questionnaire. The educators ($n = 2$) with lost or misplaced questionnaires were sent another copy and another return mail, stamped envelope. Additional phone calls were made to educators ($n = 3$) with blank responses needing clarification. The educators were read the questions and response choices over the phone. They were asked to choose one of the responses. A 100% response rate was achieved ($N = 106$).

The respondents answers were coded and entered into the computer. Frequencies were run and the demographics and results of the Administrator's and Educator's questionnaires were published (see Appendix F).

Correlations and cross tabulations were run on the data. A CAT-MOD procedure was conducted to look more in depth at correlations that were significant ($p \leq .05$). All correlations in the present study are based on an $N = 106$.

All of the relationships between degree and opportunity for parental involvement had 70% of the cells with expected values less than five. Therefore, the categories with less than five were collapsed together and CAT-MOD procedures were again conducted. This second analysis produced significant findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current interest in early childhood special education for infants and young children with special needs or those children who are at risk for special needs conditions has been stimulated by the passage of Public Law 99-457. According to White and Casto (1989), the new Public Law has caused a shift in the focus of early intervention research. Prior to the passage of this law, there have been literally hundreds of studies conducted on the effectiveness of early intervention. Results of those studies have been used to support the necessity of early intervention. Since the passage of Public Law 99-457, there is no longer a debate on whether or not early intervention services should be offered (White & Casto, 1989). White and Casto stated that future research will shift the focus to specify the factors that are related to effective early intervention practices.

Previous investigations have shown that a number of different factors influence whether or not programs are effective (Broffebrenner, 1975; Guralnick, 1978; McCollum & Thorp, 1988; Shonkoff & Hauser-Cram, 1987). The factors included: (1) preparation of personnel; (2) family involvement; (3) type of curriculum utilization; and (4) locus of service delivery.

The general purpose of this study was to focus on the four key factors that research found to be related to effective early intervention practices: (1) educational background/certification of the educator; (2) opportunities for parental involvement; (3) opportunities for the children with special needs to interact with typical peers; and (4) the curriculum utilized in the program. The present study investigated nine specific interrelationships among these key factors:

(1) the relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and opportunities for parental involvement; (2) the relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and the type of curriculum utilized; (3) the relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and opportunities available for interaction with typical children; (4) the relationship between opportunities for parental involvement and opportunities available for interaction with typical children; (5) the relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities available for involvement with typical children; (6) the relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities for parental involvement; (7) the relationship between contextual factors and opportunities for parental involvement; (8) the relationship between contextual factors and the type of curriculum utilized; and (9) the relationship between contextual factors and opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

Results related to each research question will be presented and discussed.

See Appendix G for the complete statistical details.

Question #1 - Is there a relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and opportunities for parental involvement.

It was revealed in the current study that educational backgrounds of educators was significantly related to twenty, out of the possible 31, opportunities available for parental involvement (see Appendix G, Table 5). The educational backgrounds that were significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement included: (1) the degree an educator holds; (2) the type of certification an educator had; and

(3) specific courses that the educator has taken. Degree and certification were analyzed separately due to the fact that there are differences in the requirements for a degree verses a specific type of certification.

Among the parent involvement variables, parent training workshops were significantly related, $X^2(5, n = 105) = 50.15, p < .0001$, to the degree an educator had. Parent training workshops (see Figure 1) were most likely to be provided in programs that had educators with degrees in Child Development. Educators with Speech/Language degrees were least likely to provide parent training workshops.

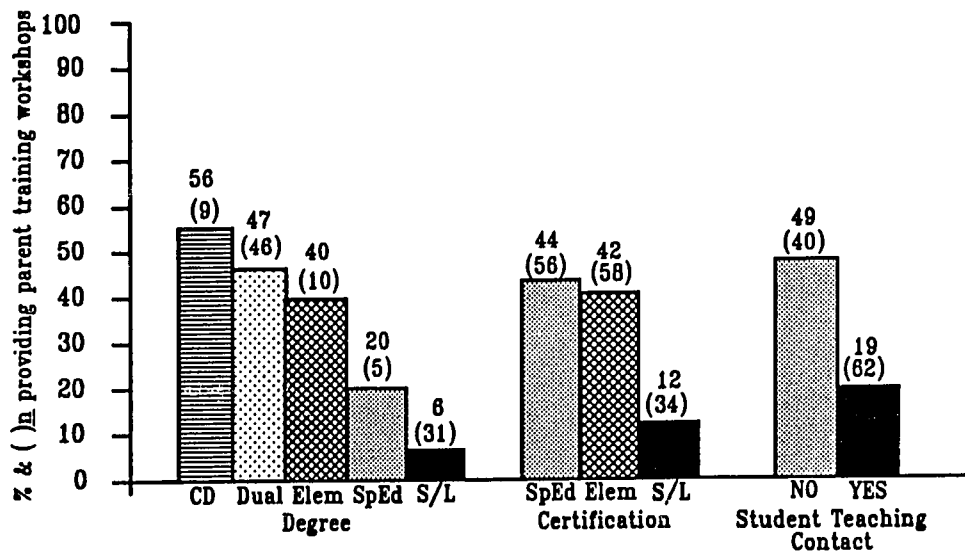


Figure 1. Percentage of educators by degree, certification and parent contact that provide parent training workshops

Parent training workshops were also significantly related to the type of certification educators hold (see Figure 1). Educators with Special Education Certification, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 7.99, p < .005, (r = .21, p < .03)$, or Elementary

Education Certification, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 6.60, p < .01, (\phi = .20, p < .04)$ were most likely to have parent training workshops available. Educators who had Speech/Language Certification, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 9.02, p < .003$, were least likely to have parent training workshops available as part of their programs.

There was a significant positive relationship between educators that had student teaching experiences with children birth through 2 years of age and opportunities for parents to participate in parent training workshops ($\phi = .03, p < .002$). Parent training workshops (see Figure 1) were also significantly related to student teaching experiences, but in a very incongruous way. Educators who had no student teaching contact, $X^2(1, n = 103) = 9.98, p < .002$, with parents were most likely to have parent training workshops available as part of their programs.

Educational meetings (see Figure 2) for parents were most likely to be provided in programs whose educators had degrees in Child Development. Educational meetings for parents were least likely to be available in programs whose educators had a Speech/Language degrees.

There was a significant positive relationship between educators with Special Education Certification and educational meetings for parents ($\phi = .23, p < .02$). Further analysis (Figure 2) revealed that educators with Severe and Profound Certification were most likely among the certification groups to have had educational meetings for parents, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.63, p < .03$. It must be noted that there were only 8 respondents with Severe and Profound Certification.

Educational meetings for parents were least likely to be found in programs whose educators have Speech/Language Certification, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 7.39, p < .007$.

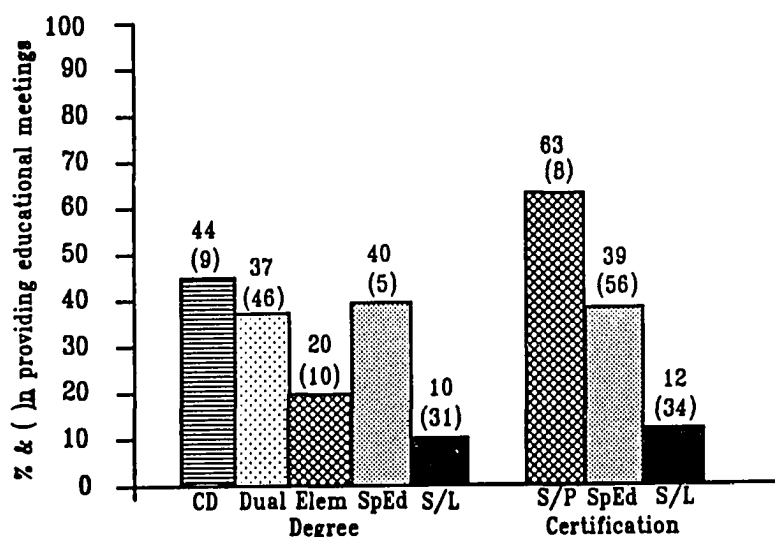


Figure 2. Percentage of educators by degree and certification that provide educational meetings for parents

There was also a significant positive relationship between courses educators have taken and the availability of educational meetings for parents. Educators with coursework in curriculum and instruction for children birth through 2 years of age were more likely to have educational meetings for parents ($r = .19, p < .05$).

There was a significant positive relationship (see Figure 3) between the provision of respite care and those programs with educators that had degrees in Elementary Education ($r = .19, p < .05$). Educators with Speech/Language degrees were least likely to have respite care available to families who had children with special needs.

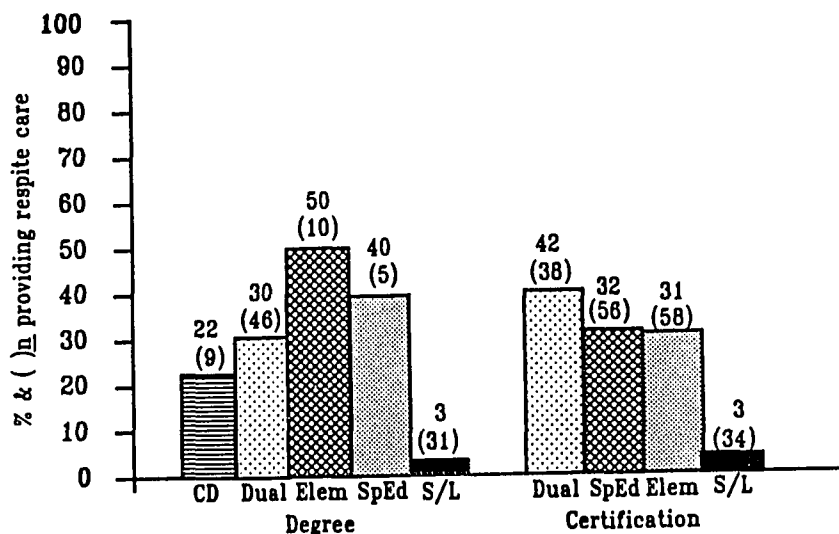


Figure 3. Percentage of educators by degree and certification that provide respite care

There was a significant positive relationship between educators with Special Education Certification and the respite care opportunities available ($r = .21$, $p < .03$). Educators with dual Elementary and Special Education Certification were most likely to have respite care available in their area, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 11.27$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 3). Respite care was least likely to be available in programs that had educators with Speech/Language Certification $X^2(1, N = 106) = 11.84$, $p < .001$.

Respite care opportunities were also significantly related to the coursework an educator had taken. Educators who had taken curriculum and instruction for children birth through 2 years of age were most likely to have had respite care available for the families in their program ($r = .29$, $p < .002$).

Toys were most likely to be loaned in programs whose educators had degrees in Special Education, $X'(5, N = 106) = 81.94, p < .0001$, (see Figure 4). Toys were least likely to be loaned in programs that had educators with Speech/Language degrees, $X'(5, N = 106) = 81.94, p < .0001$.

Analysis reveals that educators with Early Childhood Certification ($r = .39, p < .0001$), Special Education Certification ($r = .43, p < .0001$), dual Elementary and Special Education Certification ($r = .20, p < .04$), or Severe and Profound Certification ($r = .23, p < .02$) were most likely to loan toys. Educators with Speech and Language Certification were least likely to loan toys ($r = -.48, p < .0001$). Further analysis revealed that all of the educators with Severe and Profound Certification loaned toys to families, $X'(1, N = 106) = 5.68, p < .02$ (see Figure 4).

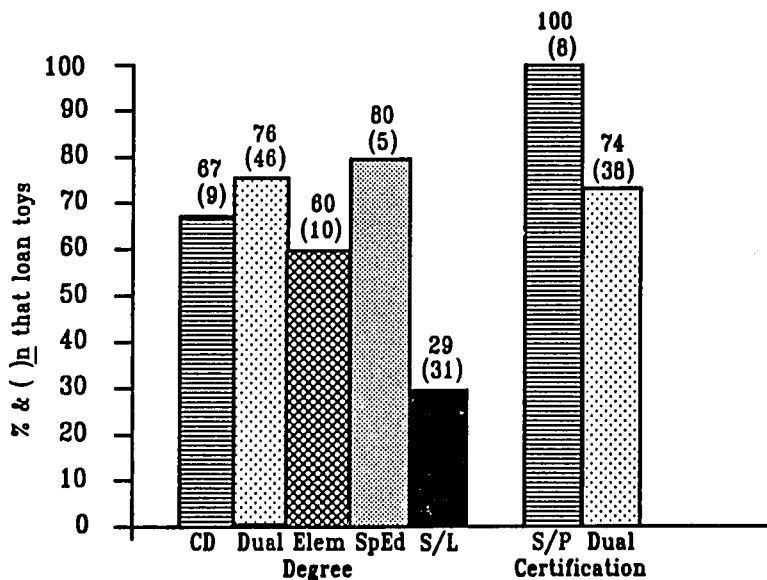


Figure 4. Percentage of educators by degree and certification that loan toys

However, it must be noted again that there were only a total of eight out of the possible 106 educators with Severe and Profound Certification. Before any generalizations can be made in regard to this finding, further research will need to be conducted.

There were relationships between the coursework that educators had taken and the loaning of toys to families. Educators who had taken coursework in medically fragile children were most likely to loan toys to families ($r = .21, p < .03$), whereas educators who had coursework in atypical development in children 3 through 5 years of age were least likely to loan toys to families ($r = -.19, p < .05$).

The degree an educator held was also significantly related to parent-teacher conferences. The conferences were most likely available in all of the programs whose educators held degrees in Special Education or Speech/Language. They were also available in a high percentage of the programs that had educators with the remaining types of degrees (see Figure 5).

Parent-teacher conferences were also significantly related to one type of certification, $\chi^2(1, N = 106) = 4.09, p < .04$ (see Figure 5). Educators with Speech/Language Certification were more likely to hold parent-teacher conferences.

Figure 6 reveals that support groups for parents were significantly related to the degree educators held. Educators with degrees in Elementary Education, Special Education, or dual degrees in both Elementary and Special Education were most likely to provide support group meetings for parents. Educators with Speech/Language degrees were least likely to have support group meetings for parents.

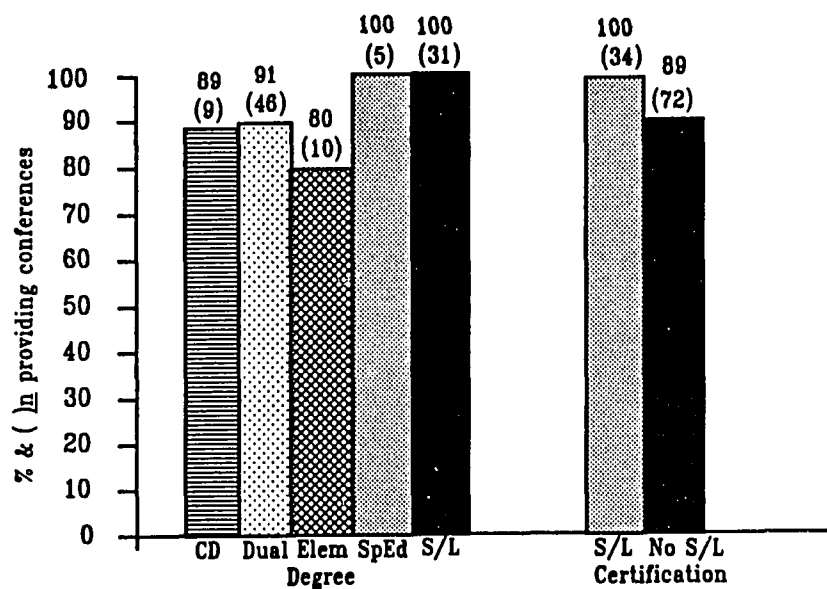


Figure 5. Percentage of educators by degree and certification providing parent-teacher conferences

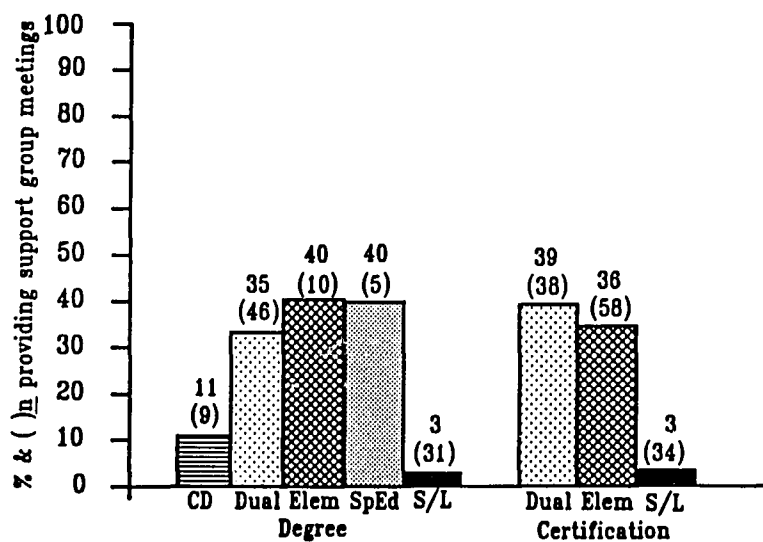


Figure 6. Percentage of educators by degree and certification that provide support group meetings for parents

Educators with Special Education Certification were most likely to have support group meetings for parents ($r = .35, p < .003$). Further analysis (Figure 6) revealed that educators with dual certification in Elementary or Special Education, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 8.30, p < .004$, or educators with Elementary Certification, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 11.32, p < .001, (r = .33, p < .006)$ were also likely to have support group meetings for parents. Support groups for parents were least likely to be available, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 11.84, p < .001$, in programs that had educators with Speech/Language Certification.

Parent volunteers were significantly related to the type of certification educators held (see Figure 7). There was a significant positive correlation between educators with Early Childhood Certification and parents involved as volunteers in the classroom ($r = .22, p < .02$). Further analysis revealed that educators with Severe and Profound (Code 207) Certification were also more likely, $X^2(1, n = 104) = 6.02, p < .01$, to use parent volunteers in the classroom. Caution again must be taken when reporting this finding because of the limited number of educators that responded who held Severe and Profound Certification ($n = 8$). Educators with Special Education Certification were least likely to have parent volunteers in the classroom, $X^2(1, n = 104) = 4.00, p < .05$.

There was a significant positive relationship between educators who have taken coursework in curriculum and instruction for children birth through 2 years of age and the opportunity for parents to be involved as volunteers in the classroom ($r = .22, p < .02$). Figure 7 reveals that a high percentage of educators, who had no

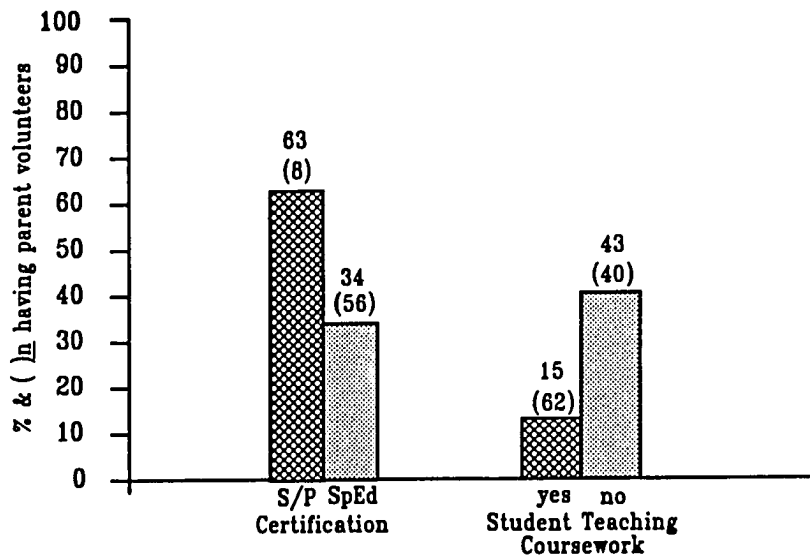


Figure 7. Percentage of educators by certification and parent contact that have parent volunteers in the classroom

student teaching contact with parents, had parent volunteers in the classroom, $X^2(1, n = 102) = 10.03, p < .002$. Whereas, educators who had student teaching contact with parents were least likely to have parents involved as volunteers in the classroom.

Parents involvement in goal and objective writing was significantly related to the types of certification educators held, $X^2(4, N = 106) = 10.40, p < .03$ (see Figure 8). Parents were least likely to be involved in writing goals and objectives if educators had Speech/Language Certification.

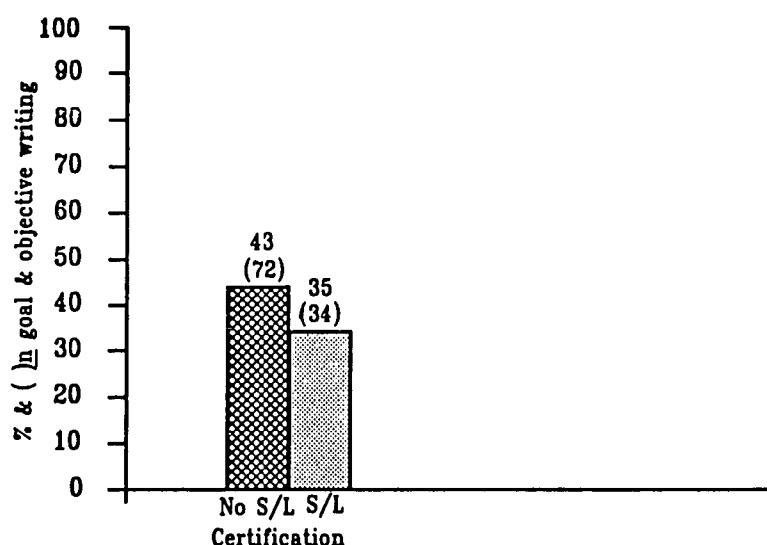


Figure 8. Percentage of educators by certification with parents involved in goal and objective writing

Parental participation in the assessment process was significantly related to the type of certification held by educators, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 6.18, p < .01$ (see Figure 9). Educators who have Speech/Language Certification were less likely to have parental participation in the assessment process.

There was a significant positive relationship between educators who have Elementary Certification and parental support during the screening process ($r = .20, p < .006$). Further analysis, Figure 10, revealed that educators with Elementary Certification, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 5.80, p < .02$, or dual Elementary and Special Education Certification, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 5.28, p < .02$, were most likely to have parental involvement during the screening process. Educators with Speech/Language Certification $X^2(1, n = 105) = 10.64, p < .001$, were least likely to give parental support during screenings.

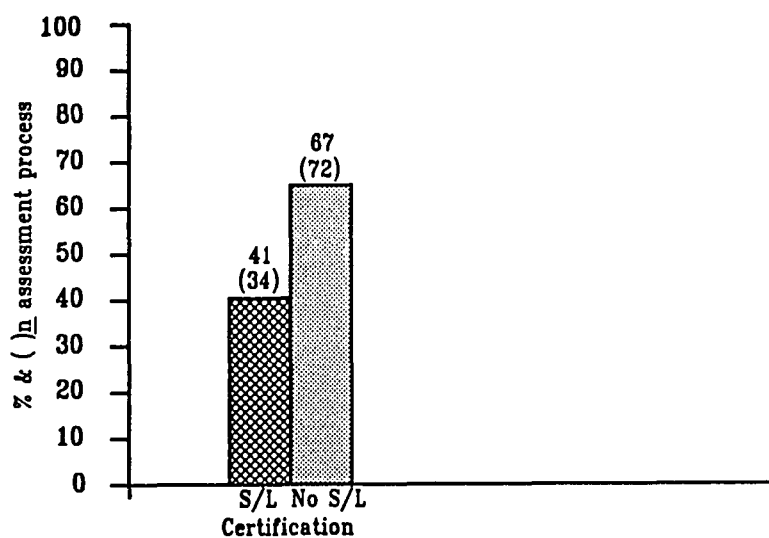


Figure 9. Percentage of educators by certification and parental participation in assessment process

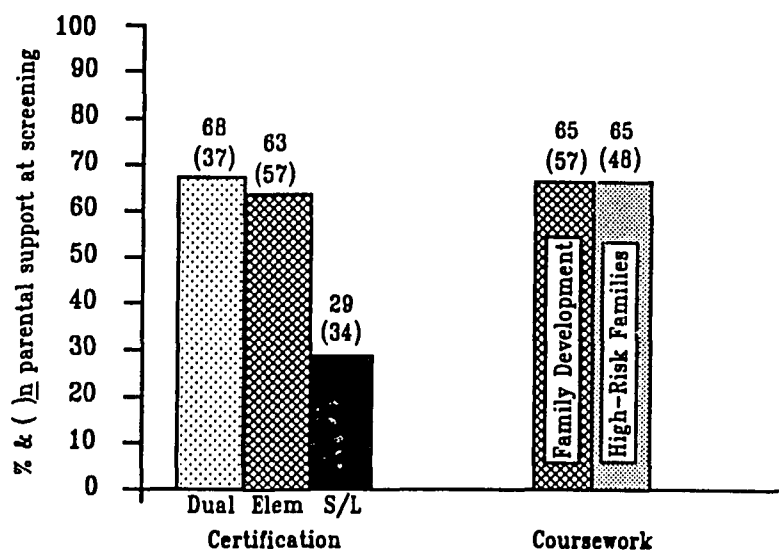


Figure 10. Percentage of educators by certification and coursework having parental support at screening

There was a significant positive correlation between educators who had taken coursework in medically fragile children ($r = .23, p < .02$), or practicum with children birth through 2 years of age with special needs ($r = .26, p < .008$) and parental support during the screening. Further analysis (Figure 10) revealed that educators who have taken family development, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 7.85, p < .005$ ($r = .22, p < .03$) or working with high-risk families, $X^2(1, n = 104) = 5.72, p < .02$, courses were more likely to have parents involved in the screening process.

Educators who had Early Childhood Certification ($r = .23, p < .02$) were most likely to send newsletters to families. Educators who have Speech/Language Certification were least likely to send newsletters home to families ($r = -.34, p < .0004$). Further analysis revealed that newsletters (see Figure 11) were most likely to be sent home on a regular basis in those classrooms that had educators with Special Education Certification, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 9.84, p < .002$ ($r = .30, p < .002$), dual Elementary and Special Education Certification, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.37, p < .02$, ($r = .23, p < .02$) or Elementary Certification, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.67, p < .02$.

Newsletters were also significantly related to the specific coursework taken by educators. Educators who had taken family development courses, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 3.96, p < .05$, ($r = .19, p < .05$) were more likely to send newsletters home to families on a regular basis. Educators with student teaching contact with parents were least likely to send newsletter home to families, $X^2(1, n = 104) = 3.86, p < .05$.

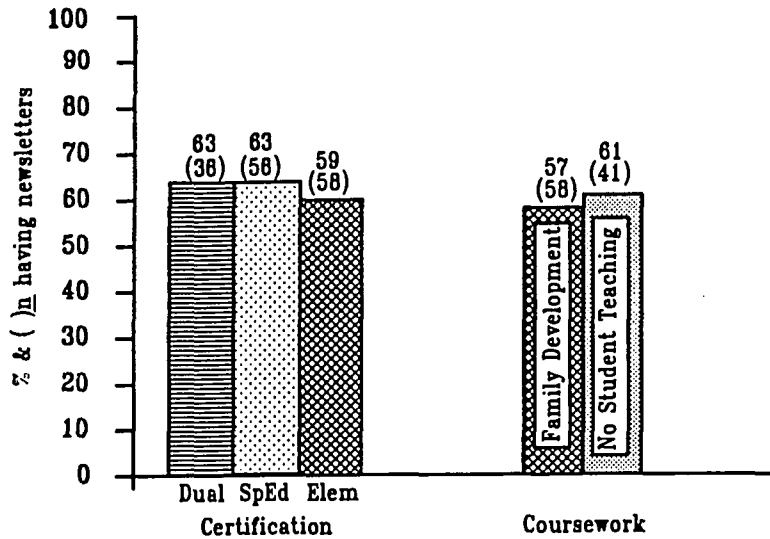


Figure 11. Percentage of educators by certification and coursework having newsletters

Informal discussions in the homes were most likely to occur in programs that had educators with previous student teaching contact involving working with parents, $X^2(1, n = 104) = 8.25, p < .004$. Informal discussions were most likely to occur in programs with educators who had taken coursework related to working with high-risk families, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 5.63, p < .02$. Informal discussions in the homes were also significantly related to coursework taken by the educator. Educators who had student teaching experience with children 3 through 5 years of age with special needs ($r = .20, p < .04$), behavior management for children birth through 5 years of age ($r = .28, p < .004$), or atypical development in children 6 through 8 years of age ($r = .20, p < .04$) were more likely to go to families homes for informal discussions.

Educators who had taken coursework in behavior management in children birth through 5 years of age ($r = .21, p < .03$), practicum with children birth through 2 years of age who have special needs ($r = .19, p < .05$), practicum with children 3 through 5 years of age who have special needs ($r = .20, p < .05$), assessment in children birth through 2 years of age ($r = .20, p < .40$), or family and marital interactions ($r = .22, p < .03$) were most likely to have counseling available for families who are enrolled in their programs. Also educators who had student teaching contact with parents were likely to have counseling available ($r = .19, p < .05$). Counseling for families of children with special needs was most likely to be available in programs with educators who have taken family and marital interaction courses, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.90, p < .03$.

Educators who have taken family development courses were most likely to have legal rights training available to families, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.34, p < .04$. Educators who had taken coursework in history and philosophy of education were least likely to have legal rights training for parents ($r = -.25, p < .01$).

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) were most likely to include family goals if the educator had Early Childhood Certification ($r = .50, p < .0001$). They also were likely to include family goals if the educator had student teaching experience working with normal children 3 through 5 years of age ($r = .21, p < .03$) or a practicum working with normal children 3 through 5 years of age ($r = .24, p < .01$). They were least likely to include family goals if the educator had student teaching experience working with children 6 through 8 years of age with special needs ($r = -.23, p < .02$).

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) were most likely to address family strengths if the educator had Early Childhood Certification ($r = .32, p < .0007$). Family strengths were also addressed on IEPs if the educator had student teaching experience with normal children 3 through 5 years of age ($r = .26, p < .007$).

Only one type of certification was related to Individual Educational Plan addressing family concerns. They were most likely to be addressed if the educator had Early Childhood Certification ($r = .30, p < .002$).

Educators with dual Early Childhood and Special Education Certification were least likely to provide individual planning meetings for parents ($r = -.24, p < .01$). They were also least likely to provide assistance in helping parents to understand the IEP ($r = -.35, p < .0003$).

Parents were most likely to be given the opportunity to partake in individual planning meetings if the educator had taken a course in assessment of children 3 through 5 years of age ($r = .21, p < .03$) or student teaching experience with children 3 through 5 years of age ($r = .20, p < .03$). They were least likely to participate in individual planning meetings if the educator had a practicum working with children 6 through 8 years of age ($r = -.22, p < .02$).

It has been suggested in the research that professionals cannot make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of young children with special needs without parental involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1975). Shonkoff and Hauser-Cram's (1987) meta-analysis of early intervention programs revealed that programs that had planned, extensive parental involvement showed significantly greater child effects.

Teaching in an early childhood special education classroom is complex and requires constant attention to different facets of the children and their development (Bailey & Wolery, 1984) and to families and their development (Safford, 1978). The results of the present study demonstrated that early childhood special education programs in which educators had degrees in Elementary Education, Special Education, dual degrees in Elementary and Special Education, and Child Development, and certification in Elementary, Special Education, Dual Elementary and Special Education, and Early Childhood were most likely to have opportunities for parental involvement available in their programs. Educators with these degrees and certification also were more likely to have taken coursework in family development, marital and family interaction, and high-risk families. All three of these courses study families in depth and emphasize the importance of understanding family systems.

Family Systems theory recognizes the fact interactions within the family are bi-directional, the child both influences and is influenced by the family (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988). They also stress that interventions with one family member may have subsequent effects on others in the family. Findings from diverse studies over the past two decades revealed that active parent-school partnerships contribute not only to the enhancement of the educational performance of the children, but also to the improvement of parenting skills and family life (Bronfenbrenner, 1975; Cone, Delawyer & Wolfe, 1985; and Linder, 1983). Early intervention programs provide an avenue for parents to learn effective parenting skills that will enable them to teach and stimulate their children with special needs in ways that can minimize the

debilitating effects of handicapping conditions (Peterson, 1987). They can receive support as they work through the initial stages of grief, confusion and frustration that come with parenting children with special needs. Early intervention programs that provide parental involvement can minimize disruption in the family unit and help establish positive patterns of interaction and increase family solidarity and communication between parents and their children with special needs (Peterson, 1987).

Educators, who have degrees and/or certification in Speech/Language were least likely to have coursework in the study of families and family systems. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that they also were least likely to have opportunities for parental involvement in their programs. Parent-teacher conferences, which are a requirement of the public school system, were the opportunities for parental involvement that they were most likely to have.

The lack of opportunities for parental involvement also may be due to educators not having been taught how or given the opportunity to incorporate new research results. According to Rosenshine (1983), many educators do not have skill in research-driven educational techniques. Future research needs to look in depth at teacher education and the factors that enable an educator to gain skills in research-driven early childhood special education practices. States that are developing competencies for certification should make sure that they provide early childhood special educators with skills in deciphering and incorporating research into their classroom practices.

Another area where there is a need for further study is the relationship between student teaching experiences and opportunities for parental involvement. Zeicher (1982) reported that the content of the student teaching experience often times leads to dependence, inflexibility, and poor habits. The findings from Zeicher's research may help to explain the incongruous findings in the current study in relationship to student teaching. It is also important to realize that the district in which the student is doing student teaching, the student teaching supervising teacher, and district policies may also be factors that impact the student teaching experience. The results of the current study revealed that educators, who did not have student teaching contact with families, were more likely to have parent volunteers in the classroom, send newsletters home on a regular basis, and have parent training workshops. Providing informal discussions in the families' homes was the only opportunity for parental involvement that was more likely to be available in an early childhood special education program if the educator had student teaching contact with families. The current study reveals a need to look more closely at student teaching experiences in order to find those that enable the educator to become more independent and flexible, and to enable educators to integrate coursework into their teaching practices.

Finally, opportunities for parental involvement could have been impacted by the lack of or availability of: (1) qualified staff to provide the programs or services; (2) resources in the community; and (3) facilities in which to house programs or services. Therefore, further investigations will be needed before specific generalizations can be made.

Question #2 - Is there a relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and the type of curriculum utilized in the program.

Curricula are "systematic procedures for organizing educational activities; the procedures include both content (what to teach) and method (how to teach)" (Lillie, 1975, p. 2). In the present study, the following research question was asked: would there be a relationship between the educational background of the educator and the types of curricula utilized. However, there were only a limited number of early childhood special education programs that utilized curricula ($n = 51$). Of those only a very limited number ($n = 30$) specified which curricula they were utilizing. Therefore, a relationship was sought between educational background of the educators and whether or not they were using a curriculum in general, not in specific. Educators with Elementary Education degrees ($r = .19$, $p < .05$) or Special Education degrees ($r = .34$, $p < .003$) were most likely to utilize a curriculum. Educators who had Speech/Language degrees were least likely to use a curriculum ($r = -.38$, $p < .0001$).

Due to the low response rate, it was felt that educators may not have responded to the curriculum question because they were uncertain as to the definition of curriculum. However, an independent study (Forest, 1989) validated the fact that educators who reported the use of a curriculum were indeed using a curriculum. The study further verified the type of curricula utilized in the early childhood special education programs.

Future research should look more in depth at both curriculum utilization in early childhood special education programs and the relationship between curriculum utilization and opportunities for parental involvement. Due to a lack of information on specific curricula, this question could not be answered in the current study.

Question #3 - Is there a relationship between the educational background/certification of the educator and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

Significant relationships were found between the educational background/certification held by the educator and the opportunities for interaction with typically developing children. The opportunities for interaction included day care centers and a variety of other arrangements for interactions.

The analysis revealed that there were significant negative correlations between the certification educators held and opportunities for children with special needs to interact with children who were typically developing. Opportunities were not likely to be available if the educator had Elementary Education Certification, ($r = -.19$, $p < .02$) or Special Education Certification, ($r = -.23$, $p < .02$). Fewer than one-third of the program educators with Elementary Education Certification $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.87$, $p < .03$, had children dually programmed in day care centers, where the children with special needs had opportunities to interact with peers who did not have special needs. Less than one-half of educators with Elementary Education Certification $X^2(1, N = 106) = 3.96$, $p < .05$, and Special Education Certification $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.56$, $p < .02$, have their children involved in a variety of other programs with typically developing children.

Significant relationships were found between the opportunity for children with special needs to being dually programmed in both the public school early childhood special education classroom and Head Start, and specific coursework. Programs that had children dually programmed in the public school early childhood special education classroom and Head Start were most likely to have educators who had a practicum working with children 3 through 5 years of age $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.16$, $p < .04$, atypical development in children 3 through 5 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.70$, $p < .03$, ($r = .21$, $p < .02$), or communication and language intervention strategies, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 8.17$, $p < .004$.

The opportunity for children to be involved with peers, who did not have special needs in situations other than in day care settings or Head Start, was also significantly related to the classroom educators who had taken specific coursework. Opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children were more likely to be available in programs that had educators who had taken the following coursework: curriculum and instruction for children 3 through 5 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 9.79$, $p < .002$, ($r = .30$, $p < .002$); parent education, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.36$, $p < .02$, ($r = .22$, $p < .02$); atypical development in children 3 through 5 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.73$, $p < .03$, ($r = .21$, $p < .03$); or atypical development in children birth through 2 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.18$, $p < .02$, ($r = .22$, $p < .02$). Opportunities to interact with typically developing children were least likely to be available in programs whose educators had taken practicum with children birth through 2 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 6.51$,

$p < .01$, ($r = .25$, $p < .01$); and curriculum and instruction for children birth through 2 years of age, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 7.71$, $p < .005$, ($r = .27$, $p < .005$).

The legislative mandates of Public Law 94-142 require that children with special needs be guaranteed a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive settings. Least restrictive environments represent a philosophy about what constitutes "appropriate educational placement" for children with special needs (Peterson, 1987). A least restrictive setting is generally considered that which is not isolated from typically developing peers (Bricker, 1978). Research over the past two decades provides ample evidence that typically developing peers can be effective intervention agents (Guralnick, 1978; Odom, Hoyson, Jamieson & Strain, 1985; Strain, Shores & Timm, 1977). One of the main premises behind this policy is the belief that children with special needs benefit from exposure to and interaction with normal peers (Bricker, 1978; Turnbull, 1982).

The opportunities for children with special needs to interact with children who are typically developing showed a significant relationship to courses with content that focuses on working with and providing developmentally appropriate environments for developing children. The findings emphasized the need for personnel preparation programs to offer coursework in curriculum and instruction, parents education, atypical development, and practicum experiences in their early childhood special education teacher training curriculums.

The lack of opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children may be due to one of the following: (1) the lack of training in effective mainstreaming; (2) the variety of types of children with special needs

involved in the settings; (3) the lack of opportunities in communities for integration to take place; or (4) the inability of educators to incorporate research-driven techniques into their programs. There is a need to further investigate this area and try and determine why educators with certain degrees do not provide opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children.

Question #4 - Is there a relationship between the opportunities for parental involvement and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

There were significant relationships between 10, out of a possible 31, opportunities for parental involvement and opportunities for children to interact with typical children. Educators that had parent volunteers involved in their programs were least likely to have children dually enrolled in the public school early childhood special education program and Head Start, $\chi^2(1, n = 104) = 5.50, p < .02$. Educators that sent notes home were also not as likely to have children dually enrolled the early childhood special education program and Head Start, $\chi^2(1, N = 106) = 8.71, p < .003, (r = -.21, p < .03)$.

Programs which provided educational meetings for parents were significantly related to opportunities for children to be dually programmed in early childhood special education programs and day care centers. Educators that presented the IEP to the parent ($r = .38, p < .0001$), presented and reviewed the IEP with the parent ($r = .27, p < .005$), provided parents with legal rights training ($r = .21, p < .03$), had support group meetings for parents ($r = .21, p < .009$), or had parents participating in the assessment process ($r = .19, p < .05$) were most likely to have opportunities available for children with special needs to interact with typical children. Educators

that had educational meetings for parents were least likely to have children dually enrolled, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.27, p < .04$).

Parental support during screening, $X^2(1, n = 105) = 4.12, p < .004$ and parental involvement in writing goals and objectives $X^2(1, N = 106) = 13.59, p < .009$ were significantly related to opportunities for children to interact with other peers who were typically developing. Well over half of the programs that had parental support available at screenings and involved parents in writing goals and objectives for their children with special needs had other arrangements for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children.

Odom and McEvoy (1988) reported that the primary objective of most early childhood special education programs is the movement of the children with special needs into the mainstream of public education. Exposure to a normally developing peer group has been reported as an effective way to achieve the transition into the mainstream. It is apparent from the findings of the current study that there is a relationship between opportunities for parental involvement and opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children. The results revealed that when parents were given the opportunity to participate in the planning and programming for their child, they were more apt to have their children have opportunities to interact with typical children.

Bricker and Bricker (1976) monitored the satisfaction of parents who had children in integrated settings. All of the parents of the children with special needs indicated that they would prefer to place their child in an integrated program, as compared to a segregated program.

Parents who had children with special needs wanted them to have access to programs in as normal a fashion and environment as possible (Linder, 1983). These parents also wanted them to have opportunities to be around peers and develop necessary social skills.

Turnbull and Winton (1983) found that mothers of children with special needs in integrated settings reported more benefits of the program for their children. They stated that the mothers reported fewer negatives, and a higher percentage of the mothers reported that their children's needs were being more adequately met in the integrated setting.

The findings revealed that opportunities for children to interact with typically developing children are related to the type of certification educators hold and specific coursework they have taken. The opportunities for children with special needs to interact with children who are typically developing showed a significant relationship to opportunities for parental involvement. Programs that gave parents opportunities for training and those programs that provided opportunities for active participation had opportunities for children to interact with typical children.

Opportunities for parental involvement and opportunities for interacting with typical children may also be due to the lack of or availability of: (1) qualified staff to provide the programs or services; (2) resources in the community; and (3) facilities in which to house programs or services. More in-depth investigations will need to be conducted before specific generalizations can be made.

Question #5 - Is there a relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

Due to the limited number of programs that utilized specific curricula and the limited number of programs that had specified curricula, no meaningful relationships could be studied. However, relationships were sought between whether or not a program utilized any curriculum in general and the opportunities available for interacting with typical children. The present study found that there was a significant relationship between the utilization of a curriculum and opportunities for children to be dually programmed in the early childhood special education program and Head Start, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.93, p < .02, (r = .20, p < .04)$. Less than one-half of the programs that used a curriculum have children dually enrolled.

Curricula in early childhood special education may be utilized in a variety of ways, according to Linder (1983). They may be followed like a bible, adopted as a guide for planning, used as a supplement to an existing program, or serve as a resource for new ideas. The manner in which any set of curricula is implemented should reflect the program philosophy. Linder (1983) stated that early childhood programs need to have a curriculum or several curricula that emphasize five main domains: (1) motor development; (2) self-help skills; (3) sensorimotor and cognitive development; (4) communication; and (5) social-emotional development. Lillie (1975, p. 2) stated that a specified curriculum provides a program with "systematic procedures for organizing educational activities".

The current study reveals that educators who have children dually enrolled in an early childhood special education program and Head Start are less likely to have a curricula. The finding is disturbing because an integration plan should be part of the early childhood special education program curricula. The educators in both programs need to make certain that the programs are working cooperatively on goals for the whole child. Before any conclusive statements can be made regarding the findings of the present study, it will be necessary to have more in-depth investigations with a larger sample of educators utilizing curricula. Future research will need to investigate in more detail the relationship between the use of curricula in general and the use of specific types of curricula, and opportunities for interacting with typical children.

Question #6 - Is there a relationship between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities for parental involvement.

Again, because information on specific curricula was not available, no meaningful relationships could be studied. However, 7 out of 31 opportunities for parental involvement were significantly related to utilization of curricula. Programs which utilized any sort of curricula were likely to send notes home,

$X^2(1, N = 106) = 4.03, p < .05, (\phi = .20, p < .05)$; have parent volunteers,

$X^2(1, n = 104) = 7.26, p < .007$; have parent training workshops,

$X^2(1, n = 105) = 4.95, p < .03$; provide support group meetings for parents,

$X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.18, p < .02, (\phi = .22, p < .02)$; have IEP's address family

strengths, $X^2(1, N = 106) = 8.25, p < .004$; or loan toys ($\phi = .39, p < .0001$).

As previously mentioned, the curriculum provides a program with "systematic procedures for organizing educational activities" (Lillie, 1975, p. 2). Linder (1983) stated that early childhood special education programs need to have parents regularly participate in their child's education. Parental involvement enables the parent to conduct follow-through efforts at home and in other social situations in which the family is involved. These follow-through efforts enable the effects of the program to be sustained after the program ends. According to Linder (1983), early childhood special education needs to have planned parent involvement activities as a part of its program.

The findings of the present study are inconclusive due to the fact that no meaningful relationships could be studied. However, the findings show that programs that have some type of curricula are likely to have opportunities for parental involvement. This finding may be due to the fact that programs with a curricula have a plan for parental involvement. Future research will need to investigate the relationship between the use of curricula in general and the use of specific types of curricula in more detail, and opportunities for parental involvement.

Question #7 - Is there a relationship between contextual factors and opportunities for parental involvement.

In this study, seven contextual factors were studied. The findings revealed that five of the contextual factors were significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement. Those factors included: (1) size (population); (2) setting in which the program was located; (3) years experience in working with children birth

to 2 years of age; (4) whether the program was run by a district or cooperative; and (5) the amount of release time that an educator had for parent involvement.

The first contextual factor that was significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement was the size of the districts (see Table 1). The size of the district was significantly related to 5 out of a possible 31 opportunities for parental involvement.

In the current study parental support during screening was more likely to be available in programs that were located in communities with 2,500 to 9,999 people. It was least likely to be available in communities with greater than 50,000 people.

Informal discussions in the homes were most likely in communities with 10,000 to 49,999 people. They were least likely to be available in communities with greater than 50,000 people.

Toys were most likely to be loaned in programs that are located in communities with over 2,500 inhabitants. They were least likely to be loaned in rural communities with less than 2,500 people.

Communities with 10,000 to 49,999 people were most likely to have respite care services available to families. Respite care was least likely to be available in rural communities with less than 2,500 people.

Finally, parent training workshops were most likely to be available in communities that had more than 50,000 inhabitants. They were least likely to be available in communities with less than 9,999 people.

The second contextual factor that was significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement is the setting in which the program took place (see Table 2).

Table 1. Relationship between the size of the town in which the program is located and opportunities for parental involvement

Parental Involvement Type	District size (%)			
	$\leq 2,499$ $\underline{n}=60$	2,500 - 9,999 $\underline{n}=13$	10,000 - 49,999 $\underline{n}=15$	$\geq 50,000$ $\underline{n}=18$
Parental support at screening $X^2(3,\underline{n}=105)=9.50, p<.02$	50	85	60	29
Informal Discussions at home $X^2(3,\underline{N}=106)=11.64, p<.009$	57	77	80	28
Loan toys $X^2(3,\underline{N}=106)=16.14, p<.001$	45	69	73	94
Respite care $X^2(3,\underline{N}=106)=9.71, p<.02$	13	38	47	28
Parent training workshops $X^2(3,\underline{n}=105)=8.68, p<.03$	23	23	40	59

Table 2. Relationship between the setting in which the program took place and opportunities for parental involvement

Parental Involvement Type	Setting (%)		
	Center-based <u>n</u> =53	Combination Home & Center <u>n</u> =31	Speech Therapy Only <u>n</u> =19
Support group meetings $\chi^2(2, \underline{n}=103)=10.56, p<.005$	58	42	0
Respite Care $\chi^2(2, \underline{n}=103)=10.84, p<.004$	42	54	4

Combination home- and center-based programs were most likely to have respite care. Center-based programs were most likely to have support group meetings for parents. Speech therapy only programs were the least likely to have the above mentioned opportunities for parental involvement.

The third contextual factor considered was the number of years of experience educators had. Opportunities for parental involvement were significantly related to the number of years of teaching experience with children birth to 2 years of age $\chi^2(3, n = 65) = 10.09, p < .02$.

Informal discussions in homes were most likely to be provided by educators who had over 3 years of experience in working with children birth to 2 years of age $\chi^2(3, n = 65) = 10.10, p < .02$. Educators with 1 to 2 years and those with over 10 years of experience in working with children birth to 2 years of age were least likely to have informal discussions in the homes.

Educators with 3 to 5 years of experience were most likely to loan toys to families. Educators with 6 to 9 years of experience were the least likely to loan toys to families $\chi^2(4, N = 106) = 9.88, p < .04$.

The fourth contextual factor to consider was the administration of the Early Childhood Special Education programs (see Table 3). Programs that were run by cooperatives were the most likely to have informal discussions in the homes. Programs that were run by districts were more likely to have opportunities available for parental involvement in three areas: (1) IEPs presented for the first time at staffing meetings; (2) parent training conferences; and (3) legal rights training.

TABLE 3. Relationship between the administration of programs and opportunities for parental involvement

Parental Involvement type	District (%)	Cooperative (%)
IEP presented to parents for first time at meeting $X^2(1, n = 100) = 32.40, p < .0001$	72	45
Parent-teacher conferences $X^2(1, n = 101) = 15.41, p < .0001$	97	83
Legal rights training $X^2(1, n = 98) = 4.76, p < .03$	79	68
Informal discussions in the home $X^2(1, n = 101) = 5.97, p < .01$	50	72

The final contextual factor to consider is the amount of release time that an educator has for parental involvement opportunities in the Early Childhood Special Education Program (see Table 4). Programs with one day release time were most likely to have parents participating in the assessment process. In addition, programs with one day release time were likely to send newsletters home to families on a regular basis. Even though the values were significant, it must be noted that less than half of the respondents had any release time. Due to the low response rate, a more in-depth study using a larger sample investigating the amount of release time available to educators in the Early Childhood Special Education Program will need to be conducted before any further generalizations can be made.

TABLE 4. Relationship between the amount of release time and opportunities for parental involvement

Opportunities for Parental Involvement	Amount of Release Time (%) (days per month)			
	< 1 n=17	1 to 5 n=22	6 to 10 n=3	> 10 n=2
Parental participation in assessment $X^2(3, n = 44) = 9.59, p < .02$	47	86	100	50
Newsletters sent home on a regular basis $X^2(3, n = 44) = 9.54, p < .02$	18	59	33	100

Espinosa and Shearer (1986) reported that many rural areas are unable to provide opportunities for parental involvement due to: (1) the lack of available resources in the community; (2) the program model being used (whether home-based, center-based, combination of home-and center-based or other); (3) the years of experience that an educator has had; (4) the amount of release time that an educator has for parental involvement activities. They reported that opportunities for parental involvement are significantly related to size and location of the districts. They also reported that the larger districts had larger funding bases, recruited and retained qualified staff, offered more specialized resources, provided programs with trained specialists, and were financially able to meet the per-child cost of special education. Rural districts often faced higher costs associated with providing specialized services to small numbers of children (Halpern, 1982).

The primary service delivery models in this study included: home-based, center-based, combination home- and center-based, and speech therapy only. The

major portion of the educator's job in a home-based program is to train the parent (Bailey & Wolery, 1984). Center-based programs and speech therapy only programs are more heavily involved in assessing children's needs, providing instruction, monitoring child performance, and record keeping (Bailey & Wolery, 1984). Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the home-based programs and combination of home- and center-based programs in this study were more likely to have a variety of opportunities for parental involvement.

This study revealed that the amount of release time had an impact on program practices. Early childhood special education programs with at least one day of release time per month were more likely to have opportunities for parental involvement than those that did not have the release time. Release time enables the educator to organize, prepare, and present parental involvement opportunities with compensation. Therefore, it is imperative that job descriptions for early interventionists include release time for the interventionists so they can provide opportunities for parental involvement.

The results of the study revealed that contextual factors definitely impact early childhood special education programs. Further research involving different geographic locations with large, medium, and small populations bases are needed before any generalizations can be made.

Question #8 - Is there a relationship between contextual factors and the type of curriculum utilized in the program.

Again, because information on specific curricula was not available, no meaningful relationships could be studied. However, relationships were sought

between contextual factors and whether or not a program utilized any curriculum in general. One contextual factor, size (population) of the communities, was related to the utilization of curriculum. Programs in towns with greater than 50,000 people were more likely to use a curriculum $X^2(3, N = 106) = 12.28, p < .006$. Those programs located in towns less than 2,500 were least likely to use curriculums $X^2(3, N = 106) = 12.28, p < .006$ ($r = -.33, p < .0006$).

As was previously noted, larger districts/cooperatives had larger funding bases, recruited and retained more qualified staff, offered more specialized resources, were financially able to meet the per-child cost of special education, and provided programs with trained specialists (Espinosa & Shearer, 1986). Therefore, it was not surprising to find that larger districts were more likely to use curricula.

There is definitely a need for further investigation into the relationship between contextual factors, and the use of curricula in general and the use of specific types of curricula. The studies will need to investigate a variety of settings in various geographic locations with varying population sizes.

Question #9 - Is there a relationship between contextual factors and the opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

There were no meaningful relationships between any of the contextual factors and opportunities available for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children. Espinosa and Shearer (1986) have reported that the size of a district impacts programming. They stated that larger districts are able to provide program options because they had larger funding bases, recruited and retained more qualified staff and were able to meet the per-child cost of special education.

Smaller districts' funding bases were very minimal, they had limited staff and they had a more difficult time meeting the per-child cost of special education. Due to these factors, smaller districts were not able to provide the program options to young children with special needs.

Future research will need to investigate the area of curriculum utilization in early childhood special education programs to determine what factors impact curriculum selection and utilization. The investigation will need to be conducted in a variety of locations to determine whether or not contextual factors impact curriculum selection and utilization.

Limitations

One major limitation that must be addressed in relationship to this study is the fact that the study was conducted in one rural midwestern state. In South Dakota there are only two major towns with populations greater than 50,000. Due to this fact there are many rural areas that have very limited resources and personnel. It must also be noted that even though 100% of the early childhood educators in South Dakota responded, the sample was not randomly selected from all possible early childhood special education teachers nationwide. Therefore the findings may be descriptive of the factors in rural states that impact opportunities for parental involvement, opportunities to interact with typical children, and curriculum utilization, but may not be generalizable to more populous states located in various regions of the country.

A second limitation to this study is the fact that the state was requesting that educators fill out and return the questionnaire. Even though the only means of

identification was their identification numbers, there were several questions in regard to population and location of the setting that could identify certain programs. Therefore educators could have filled out what they thought the state wanted them to be doing or what they thought would be best, rather than what was actually happening.

Finally, caution should be used when interpreting the findings due to small frequencies in several of the categories. The potential for Type I error is increased. However, only those relationships with conservative p values were reported. This study is to be considered a preliminary study. A number of more in-depth studies can be conducted as a result of this study.

Suggestions for Further Research

The same questionnaire with a few revisions with regard to location could be conducted in a number of different states around the country, making sure that there were samples from large-, medium-, and small-sized states in each of the regions of the United States. It would be interesting to see if there are differences from state to state or if commonalities are found. This research would be best if conducted in a year or two after states have developed their personnel preparation programs that are mandated for states that accept PL 99-457 monies.

The same questionnaire could also be conducted in South Dakota after they have implemented their personnel preparation programs for Early Childhood Special Educators and related service personnel. The first questionnaire could provide the baseline data regarding programs and personnel prior to the

implementation of PL 99-457. This information could then be compared with programs and personnel after the new certification was put into effect.

In addition a number of specific questions which were represented in the questionnaire need further research: (1) what is the relationship between teacher education and the factors that enable an educator to gain skills in research-driven early childhood special education practices; (2) what is the relationship between student teaching experiences and opportunities for parental involvement; (3) what is the relationship between curricula utilization in early childhood special education programs and parental involvement; (4) what is the relationship between educators with certain degrees and opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children; (5) what is the relationship between curriculum utilization in early childhood special education programs and opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children; (6) what factors impact curriculum selection and utilization.

Summary

The purpose of this investigation was to look in depth at early childhood special education programs in South Dakota, and to evaluate specific factors that influence the establishment of developmentally appropriate public school early intervention programs. The study focused on the four key factors that research found to be related to effective early intervention practices: (1) educational background/certification of the educator; (2) opportunities for parental involvement; (3) opportunities for the children with special needs to interact with typical peers; and (4) the curriculum utilized in the program. The present study investigated nine

specific interrelationships among these key factors: (1) educational background/certification of the educator and opportunities for parental involvement; (2) educational background/certification of the educator and the type of curriculum utilized; (3) educational background/certification of the educator and opportunities available for interaction with typical children; (4) opportunities for parental involvement and opportunities available for interaction with typical children; (5) type of curriculum utilized and opportunities available for involvement with typical children; (6) type of curriculum utilized and opportunities for parental involvement; (7) contextual factors and opportunities for parental involvement; (8) contextual factors and the type of curriculum utilized; and (9) contextual factors and opportunities available for interaction with typical children.

The current study revealed that educational background/certification of educators was significantly related to 20 of the possible 31 opportunities available for parental involvement. Early childhood special education programs that had educators with degrees in Elementary Education, Special Education, dual degrees in Elementary and Special Education, and Child Development, and certification in Elementary, Special Education, Dual Elementary and Special Education, and Early Childhood were most likely to have opportunities for parental involvement available in their programs. Educators, who have degree and/or certification in Speech/Language were least likely to have opportunities for parental involvement in their programs.

A relationship was sought between educational background of the educators and whether or not they utilized a curriculum in general. Educators with

Elementary Education degrees/Certification or Special Education degrees/Certification were most likely to utilize a curriculum. Because only a limited number of early childhood special education programs utilized specific curriculum, no further relationships could be examined.

The opportunities for children with special needs to interact with children who are typically developing showed a significant relationship to the degree an educator had and certifications that an educator holds. The opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children was related to courses that an educator had taken which had content focusing on working with and providing developmentally appropriate environments for developing children.

Opportunities for parental involvement increased the likelihood that there would be opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children. The results revealed that when parents were given the opportunity to participate in the planning and programming for their child, they were more apt to have their children have opportunities to interact with typical children.

Due to the limited number of programs that utilize specific curricula and the limited number of programs that have specified curricula, no significant relationships were found between the utilization of a curriculum and opportunities available for interacting with typical children. Therefore, relationships were sought between whether or not a program utilized a curriculum and opportunities available for interacting with typical children. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between the utilization of a curriculum and opportunities for children

to be dually programmed in the early childhood special education program and Head Start. Before any conclusive statements can be made regarding this finding it will be necessary to have an more in-depth investigations.

A relationship was sought between the type of curriculum utilized and opportunities for parental involvement. Again, due to the fact that a very limited number of programs utilized curricula, no meaningful relationships related to parental involvement were found. However, programs with specified curricula are more likely to have opportunities for parental involvement.

Five contextual factors out of seven were significantly related to opportunities for parental involvement. Those factors included: (1) size (population); (2) setting in which the program was located; (3) years experience in working with children birth to 2 years of age; (4) whether the program is run by a district or cooperative; and (5) the amount of release time that an educator had for parent involvement.

Relationships were sought between contextual factors and whether or not a curriculum was used. Towns with greater than 50,000 people were most likely to use a curriculum. Those programs located in towns less than 2,500 were least likely to use curricula.

There was no significant relationship between any of the contextual factors and opportunities available for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children. Further investigations are needed in this area.

It is apparent from this study that there are significant interrelationships between the four key factors related to effective early intervention practices. The present study revealed that educators with Early Childhood Education or

coursework related to working with families were most likely to provide opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typical children. Educators with Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, or Special Education Certification, Child Development, or Special Education degrees; or coursework related to working with families were most likely to provide opportunities for parental involvement. Opportunities for children with special needs to interact with typically developing children were most likely to be available in programs that had opportunities for parental involvement, utilized curricula, and are located in districts with over 2,500 inhabitants. Programs that utilized curricula were more likely to have opportunities for parental involvement. Opportunities for parental involvement were most likely to occur in communities over 2,500 inhabitants, in combination home-and center-based programs, and in programs that had one or more days of release time for parental involvement. Curricula were most likely to be utilized in districts with greater than 2,500 inhabitants.

Personnel preparation planners, instructors, and administrators should take heed and make sure that they incorporate family courses into their Early Childhood Special Education curriculum so that opportunities for parental involvement occurs out in the field. The current study also points to the need for personnel preparation courses to instruct educators in the need for curricula and how to develop, incorporate, and evaluate curricula in Early Childhood Special Education programs. They will also need to develop methods that will enable educators to evaluate and utilize research to help them modify and justify their programs.

Program planners and administrators should continually monitor program practices to ensure that they are incorporating effective early intervention practices. They will need to look at the educational background of future personnel to make sure that they have personnel who have a strong educational and experiential background that will enable them to provide developmentally appropriate, effective, early intervention practices.

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APPENDIX A:

HUMAN SUBJECTS

INFORMATION ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

(Please follow the accompanying instructions for completing this form.)

1. Title of project (please type): An Analysis of Parental Involvement,

Least Restrictive Environments, and Preparation of Personnel in
Early Childhood Special Education Programs.

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes in procedures affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review.

Debara Sue Forest 12/12/88 Debara Sue Forest
Typed Name of Principal Investigator Date Signature of Principal Investigator

123 Pugsley, SDSU, Brookings, SD 605-688-5711
Campus Address Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of others (if any) Date Relationship to Principal Investigator
Major Professor

4. ATTACH an additional page(s) (A) describing your proposed research and (B) the subjects to be used, (C) indicating any risks or discomforts to the subjects, and (D) covering any topics checked below. CHECK all boxes applicable.

- ☐ Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ Deception of subjects
☐ Subjects under 14 years of age and(or) ☐ Subjects 14-17 years of age
☐ Subjects in institutions

☒ Research must be approved by another institution or agency

South Dakota Division of Education, Section for Special Education

5. ATTACH an example of the material to be used to obtain informed consent and CHECK which type will be used.

- ☐ Signed informed consent will be obtained.
☒ Modified informed consent will be obtained.

6. Anticipated date on which subjects will be first contacted: 1 10 89
Month Day Year

Anticipated date for last contact with subjects: 4 30 89
Month Day Year

7. If Applicable: Anticipated date on which audio or visual tapes will be erased and(or) identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments:

Month Day Year

8. Signature of Head or Chairperson Date Department or Administrative Unit

9. Decision of the University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research:

☒ Project Approved ☐ Project not approved ☐ No action required

George G. Karas 2-3-89 PM/KG
Name of Committee Chairperson Date Signature of Committee Chairperson

APPENDIX B:

INTRODUCTION LETTER



80
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

January 5, 1989

Dear :

During the month of January you, as an early childhood special education teacher or administrator, will receive a questionnaire seeking information about your district's Early Childhood Special Education Program and Services. There are two different surveys. One is a teacher survey and one is an administrator survey. It has been designed so that you can reply with minimal effort.

In order to plan for future programs and services in our state, it is extremely important that you complete the survey. I realize you may feel this is a burden of paper work from the State, but to my knowledge we have never asked for indepth information on Early Childhood Special Education Programs in South Dakota. I do appreciate the time it takes to complete such surveys and I extend a thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

Paulette R. Levisen
Early Childhood Coordinator
Section for Special Education

PRL:amh

P.S I am available to listen to any concerns you may have on this matter.

SECTION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
700 GOVERNORS DRIVE, PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57501

APPENDIX C:

COVER LETTER



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

January 26, 1989

Dear :

The South Dakota Division of Education, Section for Special Education is gathering baseline data on the status of early childhood special education services and programs in the state. This study is being conducted to assess current programs and to plan for the future. Recently you received a letter from the Division about this project.

You are being asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire. If you do not have children birth through 5 years of age on IEP's in your care, please complete page one, return that page in the envelope provided and discard the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is being sent to all educators providing ECSE programs and services in the state, as well as to administrators.

All responses will remain confidential and will be presented as statistical summaries. The data will be used for research purposes. The identification number on the questionnaire is for follow-up purposes only.

Please complete this as promptly as possible as we would like to have all data in by February 10, 1989. Return your questionnaire in the postage paid envelope provided.

We appreciate your hard work and the time you will take to provide this information. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 605-688-3040 or 605-692-9674. Thank you for your help with our research effort.

Sincerely,

Sue Forest
Project Director

SF:amh

Enclosures

APPENDIX D:

EDUCATORS SURVEY

Early Childhood Special Education Programs and Services
Educator's Questionnaire



If your District has any children birth through 5 years of age on IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) or any children with special needs who are in programs or services directly from the district or contracted with the district, please complete this questionnaire. If you DO NOT have any children birth through 5 years of age on IEPs in your program or service, check the box below, remove this page from the questionnaire and return this page in the envelope provided. You may discard the questionnaire. Thank you for your help.

☐

**THERE ARE NO CHILDREN BIRTH THROUGH 5 YEARS OF AGE
ON IEPs**

This questionnaire seeks information about all public school affiliated early childhood special education programs and services in 85 r district which are provided to children birth through 5 years of age and their families. Throughout this questionnaire the words ECSE child or children refers to individuals birth through 5 years of age who have special needs or are on IEPs in your district. ECSE refers to Early Childhood Special Education. For our purposes, when we talk about an ECSE PROGRAM we are referring to either a program, setting, or classroom for children birth through age 5.

PART I YOUR EDUCATION

1. How many years have you been teaching in ECSE programs for children in each age category?

Birth through 2 years of age _____ years
 3 through 5 years of age _____ years

2. Including this current school year how much cumulative teaching experience (excluding student teaching) have you had with each of the following groups?

a) older special needs children (older than age 5) _____ yrs
 b) normally developing children aged birth through 2 yrs _____ yrs
 c) normally developing children aged 3 through 5 yrs _____ yrs
 d) normally developing children older than 5 yrs _____ yrs

3. Circle the number which indicates whether you currently have each of the following types of certification. (The codes in brackets are the old ones)

	NO	YES
Code 206 Special Education (K-12) [35]	0	1
Code 201 Nursery School [33]	0	1
Code 202 Elementary Education (K-8) [22]	0	1
Combination Code 201 and Code 206 [33 and 35]	0	1
Combination Code 206 and Code 202 [35 and 22]	0	1
Code 207 Severe and Profound [35.1]	0	1
Code 402 Speech-Language Therapy [36]	0	1
Other, please explain _____		

4. Please complete the following for all professional degrees that you have completed.

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Type of Degree	Majors/Specialty	College/University Granting Degree
Associate		
B.A./B.S.		
M.A./M.S.		
Phd./EdD.		
Other		

5. Did your student teaching experience include any direct personal contact with parents?

0 = No

1 = Yes

8 = NA, no student teaching

6. How many college credits have you completed since you received your most recent degree? [If none write "0"]

_____ Credits

7. Since Jan 1, 1987, how much inservice training have you had in your district or cooperative that was directly related to ECSE?

1 = A great deal

2 = Some

3 = Very little

4 = None

- 8a. Are you interested in receiving further training related to special needs children birth through age 2?

0 = No

1 = Yes

- 8b. Are you interested in receiving further training related to special needs children 3 through 5 years old?

0 = No

1 = Yes

9. Has the course work you have taken covered each of the following areas?
(Please circle one number for each.) 87

	NO	YES
a) Social and philosophical foundations of education	0	1
b) Social and philosophical foundations of special education	0	1
c) History and philosophy of education	0	1
d) History and philosophy of special education	0	1
e) History and philosophy of early childhood special education	0	1
f) Human growth and development	0	1
g) Normal development of children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
h) Normal development of children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
i) Normal development of children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
J) Atypical development of children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
k) Atypical development of children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
l) Atypical development of children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
m) Survey of special education	0	1
n) Working with high risk families	0	1
o) Family development	0	1
p) Principles of family and marital interaction	0	1
q) Parent education	0	1
r) Working with families of special needs children	0	1
s) Stages of grieving and loss	0	1
t) Assessment of children birth through 2 years of age	0	1

	NO	YES
u) Assessment of children 3 through 8 years of age	0	1
v) Assessment of children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
w) Curriculum and instruction for children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
x) Curriculum and instruction for children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
y) Curriculum and instruction for children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
z) Communication/language development	0	1
aa) Communication/language intervention strategies	0	1
bb) Working with medically fragile and technology dependent children	0	1
cc) Behavior and classroom management (Birth-5)	0	1
dd) Behavior and classroom management for early elementary years (6-8)	0	1
ee) Interdisciplinary and interagency teaming techniques and strategies	0	1
ff) Case management	0	1
gg) Designing and implementing IEPs	0	1
hh) Practicum in working with normal children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
ii) Practicum in working with normal children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
jj) Practicum in working with normal children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
kk) Practicum in working with special needs children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
ll) Practicum in working with special needs children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
mm) Practicum in working with special needs children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1

	NO	YES
nn) Supervised student teaching working with normal children birth through 2 years o.89_e	0	1
oo) Supervised student teaching working with normal children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
pp) Supervised student teaching working with normal children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1
qq) Supervised student teaching working with special needs children birth through 2 years of age	0	1
rr) Supervised student teaching working with special needs children 3 through 5 years of age	0	1
ss) Supervised student teaching working with special needs children 6 through 8 years of age	0	1

10. To which of the following professional organizations do you currently belong?

	NO	YES
National Education Association (NEA)	0	1
South Dakota Education Association(SDEA)	0	1
South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC)	0	1
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	0	1
Division of Early Childhood (DEC)	0	1
American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA)	0	1
Others (List below)		

PART II THE ECSE PROGRAM YOU WORK WITH

90

11. Is the district in which your ECSE program is located in...

- 1 = a large city (more than 50,000)
- 2 = a smaller city (10,000-50,000)
- 3 = a small town (2,500 up to 10,000)
- 4 = a rural area (less than 2,500)
- 5 = other, please specify _____

12. Which of the following best describes the geographic region where the district is located? (Please circle only one response)

- 1 = Northeastern South Dakota
- 2 = Southeastern South Dakota
- 3 = Central South Dakota
- 4 = North Central South Dakota
- 5 = South Central South Dakota
- 6 = Northwestern South Dakota
- 7 = Southwestern South Dakota

13. Is your ECSE program run by . . .

- 1 = a single district or
- 2 = a cooperative (group of districts)

14. How many children in your caseload are on IEPs in your program in each of the following age categories? [If NONE write "0"]

	Number
Birth through 11 months	_____
1 year old up to 2 years old	_____
2 year olds	_____
3 year olds	_____
4 year olds	_____
5 year olds	_____

15. How many children on IEPs in your program are in each of the following disability categories? [IF None Write 0]

	Number
a) prolonged assistance	_____
b) special assistance	_____

16. Are each of the following types of special needs represented in your own class/caseload?

	NO	YES
Orthopedically/physically impaired	0	1
Mentally retarded	0	1
Emotionally disturbed	0	1
Health impaired	0	1
Speech/language impaired	0	1
Autistic	0	1
Hearing impaired	0	1
Deaf	0	1
Visually impaired	0	1
Blind	0	1
Deaf and blind	0	1
Severely multihandicapped	0	1
Developmentally delayed (no specific diagnosis)	0	1
At risk for delay	0	1
Other, please explain _____		

17. How readily can you obtain services from each of the following types of personnel should you need them? [Circle one response for each type]

92

Type of Personnel	Readily Available	Available But Not Quickly	Not Available
Psychologist	3	2	1
Occupational Therapist	3	2	1
Physical Therapist	3	2	1
School Nurse	3	2	1
Community Health Nurse	3	2	1
Social Worker	3	2	1
Speech Therapist	3	2	1
EPIC	3	2	1
Crippled Children's Hospital and School	3	2	1
School for the Visually Handicapped	3	2	1
School for the Deaf	3	2	1
Other (please list and rate)			
_____	3	2	1
_____	3	2	1
_____	3	2	1

- 18a How many children 3 through 5 are dually enrolled in your program and in Head Start? [If None Write 0]

_____ children

- 18b How many children birth through 5 that are in your program are also on IEPs in a private daycare/preschool setting? [If None Write "0"]

93

_____ children

19. Do children as a part of your program participate in activities or outings with other early childhood or kindergarten programs for non-handicapped children?

0 = No

1 = Yes

20. Who is the supervisor who directly oversees your program?
[Please circle only one]

1 = Superintendent

2 = Special Education Coordinator

3 = Principal

4 = Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator

5 = Other, please specify _____

21. Does your immediate supervisor have special training/experience in Early Childhood Special Education?

0 = No

1 = Yes

22. Which setting best describes your program?

1 = Center-based but on an individual case basis (services and programs are provided in a setting outside the home)

2 = Center-based groups (services and programs are provided in a group setting outside the home)

3 = Home-based (services are provided in the home)

4 = Combination home-and center-based (services and programs are provided in the home part of the time and outside the home for part of the time)

5 = Speech therapy only

6 = Other, please explain _____

23. Approximately how many hours per week does the average child in each age group receive services or participate in our program?
- a) birth through 2 years of age? _____ hours per week
- b) 3 through 5 years of age? _____ hours per week
24. How many ECSE children's IEPs are you directly responsible for monitoring?
- _____ Children's IEPs
25. How much release time is available for you to do parent involvement contacts?
- 0 = None
 1 = less than 1 day per month
 2 = 1-5 days per month
 3 = 6-10 days per month
 4 = 11-15 days per month
 5 = More than 15 days, How many days? _____

26. Does your IEP address each of the following areas?

	NO	YES
a) Family strengths	0	1
b) Family concerns	0	1
c) Family goals	0	1

- 27a Are the IEPs for children in your program. . .

1 = a single document prepared by staff members
 2 = single documents, each completed by a staff member

- 27b How often are the documents compiled in the following ways?

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
1 = By team members only	1	2	3	4	5
2 = By team members and parents	1	2	3	4	5
3 = By team members, parents, and including outside agencies when needed	1	2	3	4	5

28. How, often is the IEP for the child presented to at least one parent in each of the following ways?

95

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
a) It is discussed with parent(s) prior to IEP meeting?	1	2	3	4	5
b) It is discussed with parent(s) at IEP meeting for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
c) It is presented to the parent(s) and then reviewed with them at a later time.	1	2	3	4	5

29. Do you know what PL 99-457 is?

0 = No

1 = Yes

30. Are you exploring or thinking of implementing Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in your district?

0 = No

1 = Yes, please explain what your district is doing. _____

- 31a. Are you currently using a curriculum?

0 = No (Go to Question 32)

1 = Yes

- 31b. Is it a:

1 = Teacher designed curriculum

2 = District designed curriculum

3 = Commercial curriculum (specify) _____

4 = Other (Specify) _____

32. On the average how often is data collected to evaluate a child's progress?

1 = At least daily

2 = Several times a week

3 = 2-3 times a month

4 = Once a month

5 = About quarterly

6 = About every 6 months

7 = About once a year

8 = Less often than once a year

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CENTER-BASED PROGRAM GO TO QUESTION 37

33. Think about how your center-based program is typically run as you read each of the following statements. How frequently do each of the following things happen.

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
a) children have time to move freely around the room and playground	1	2	3	4	5
b) children have a time to select and use materials on their own direction	1	2	3	4	5
c) all children usually engage in the same activity at the same time	1	2	3	4	5
d) children are expected to join and remain with a group activity which is directed by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5
e) children's activities are changed when the clock says it's time for the next scheduled activity	1	2	3	4	5
f) children may spend as much time as they choose to complete their work or their play	1	2	3	4	5
g) group activities are encouraged more than individual activities	1	2	3	4	5
h) loud boisterous play is prohibited at all times	1	2	3	4	5
i) In all situations or activities, and for all children, sharing materials and equipment is required by teachers	1	2	3	4	5
j) the teacher often sits near an activity without entering into it, indirectly encouraging and facilitating play	1	2	3	4	5
k) adults talk and listen to a child on a face to face level	1	2	3	4	5

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
l) adults listen to children when they speak, offer ideas, contribute suggestions, share an experience	1	2	3	4	5
m) the teacher and other adults provide extensive suggestions for children	1	2	3	4	5
n) the physical environment has clearly defined centers of learning	1	2	3	4	5
o) children are required to walk in line when moving from place to place	1	2	3	4	5
p) the teacher positively acknowledges children's contributions	1	2	3	4	5
q) children wait for teacher instructions and patterns before constructing their own products	1	2	3	4	5
r) the teacher and other adults speak in positive language	1	2	3	4	5
s) children's desires and wishes are often granted	1	2	3	4	5
t) the teachers and other adults freely give praise	1	2	3	4	5
u) children initiate ideas and plans for work and play	1	2	3	4	5
v) the schedule of the day's events are kept constant	1	2	3	4	5
w) materials and equipment for the children's use are where the children can see them and where they can help themselves	1	2	3	4	5

34. Please indicate whether each of the following describes the location of your program.

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	NO	YES
a) Located in a public school elementary building	0	1
b) Located near a Kindergarten	0	1
c) Located on the ground floor	0	1
d) Located in a hospital	0	1
e) Located in a public school secondary building	0	1
f) Located so that it is accessible to individuals with special needs	0	1
g) Other, please specify _____		

- 35a. Which of the following best describes your center-based program?

1 = we have our own room (Skip to Question 36)
 2 = we share space with another program or activity

- 35b. With whom do you share your space?

1 = another ECSE program
 2 = another early childhood program (NOT ECSE)
 3 = a kindergarten
 4 = Other --> Please Explain _____

36. Which of the following describes your ECSE classroom?

	NO	YES
a) A fenced-in play area	0	1
b) Areas available for individual or one-to-one programming	0	1
c) Areas available for testing	0	1

	NO	YES
d) Areas available for observation	0	1
e) Carpeted area	0	1
f) Quiet area	0	1
g) Storage space for equipment	0	1
h) Lockers for each child	0	1
i) Bathrooms in classroom	0	1
j) Bathrooms close to classroom	0	1
k) Sinks in classroom	0	1
l) Sinks close to classroom	0	1
m) drinking water in classroom	0	1
n) a diaper area	0	1

37. Does your program area have provisions for the isolation of ill children?

0 = No

1 = Yes --> Describe _____

38. Are each of the following services available to parents in your program?

	NO	YES
a) Counseling	0	1
b) Individualized planning meeting	0	1
c) Informal discussions at home	0	1
d) Legal rights training for parents	0	1
e) Loaning of toys to parents	0	1
f) Loaning of teaching materials to parents	0	1
g) Notes sent home on a regular basis	0	1
h) Newsletter sent home on a regular basis	0	1

	NO	YES
i) Personal contact between parents and ¹⁰⁰ teacher/ teacher aide?	0	1
j) Parent-teacher conferences	0	1
k) Parent training workshops	0	1
l) Parents working as volunteers in the center	0	1
m) Respite care	0	1
n) Support group meetings for parents	0	1
o) Educational meetings for parents	0	1
p) Telephone conversations with parents	0	1
q) Parental participation in screening	0	1
r) Parental participation in assessment	0	1
s) If needed, assistance is given to parents who have difficulty understanding IEPs, lesson plans, therapy, etc.	0	1
t) Training is given to parents who express a particular need	0	1

39. How frequently are parents involved in the process of making decisions about program placement for their child?

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Often
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Seldom
- 5 = Never

40. Prior to an IEP meeting how often are parents involved in deciding the goals and objectives for their child's IEP?

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Often
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Seldom
- 5 = Never

41. Does your district plan any special inservices for ECSE personnel?

0 = No

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1 = Yes

2 = The cooperative provides inservices relating to the early childhood special education personnel

42. How frequently are you in contact with other early childhood providers outside your program?

1 = Always

2 = Often

3 = Sometimes

4 = Seldom

5 = Never

43. How isolated do you feel from other professionals who can relate to your teaching situation?

1 = Extremely isolated

2 = Very isolated

3 = Somewhat isolated

4 = A little isolated

5 = Not at all isolated

Thank you for your help. Please check this questionnaire over to be certain you haven't missed any questions you were to answer. Place it in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope provided. Would you like a summary of the results of this study?

0 = No

1 = Yes

APPENDIX E:

REMINDER LETTER



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

January , 1989

Dear _____ :

Last week you received a questionnaire seeking information about Early Childhood Special Education Programs and Services in your district.

If you have already completed and returned it to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. In order to plan for future programs and services in our state, it is extremely important that your survey also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the Early Childhood Special Education Programs and Services available to children and families in South Dakota.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me after 5:00 P.M. collect (605-692-9674) and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Sue Forest
Project Coordinator

SF:amh

APPENDIX F:**SURVEY RESULTS****Demographics/Settings**

Over two-thirds (68% Edu 13) of the public school early childhood special education programs and services are run by single districts. The remaining third (Edu 13) of the programs and services are run by cooperatives and one is located on a military base. Sixty-five percent (Admin 9) are situated in rural towns with populations of less than 2,500 people. Nineteen percent (Admin 9) are located in small towns with populations from 2,500 up to 10,000 people.

A majority (64% Edu 34A) of the programs and services are located in elementary public school buildings that are easily accessible to children with special needs (66% Edu 34F). Approximately two-thirds (65% Edu 35B) of the educators reported that they have their own classroom.

Thirty-one percent (Edu 22) of the public school early childhood programs are center-based with groups of children with special needs at one time, 18% (Edu 22) are center-based but on an individual case basis, 2% (Edu 22) are home-based only, 29% (Edu 22) are a combination of home and center-based and 19% (Edu 22) are speech therapy only. Forty-one percent (Edu 18A) report that the children they have are also enrolled in Head Start programs.

Over half (52% Edu 19 and 62% Admin 60A) of the public school early childhood special education programs and services reported that the children with special needs have opportunities available for involvement with children who do not have special needs.

Forty-five districts/cooperatives (Admin 15) reported that the numbers of children with special needs, birth through two years of age, had increased; 44 (54% Admin 16A) reported no change in the number of children with special needs served, birth through two years of age; and seven (9% Admin 16A) reported a decrease in the number of children served, birth through two years of age.

Forty-five districts/cooperatives (Admin 17A) reported in the last two years there has been an increase in the number of children with special needs, three through five years of age, and five districts/cooperatives (Admin 17A) reported a decrease in the number of children with special needs three through five years of age in their early childhood special education programs and services.

Well over half (67% Edu43) reported that they were isolated in their current teaching situations. Only 15% reported that they had very frequent contact with other early childhood providers.

Personnel

Education

A majority (43% Edu 4B) of the educators have majored in a combination of Elementary and Special Education. Of those remaining, 39% (Edu 4B) have majored in Speech/Language Disorders/Correction, 7.5% (Edu 4B) have majored in Child Development, and less than 1% (Edu 4B) have majored in Early Childhood Special Education.

Fifteen percent (Admin 4B) have their first degree and 57% (Admin 4E) have their second degree in Educational Administration. Twenty-one percent

(Admin 4B) of the administrators have their first degree and 17% (Admin 4E) have their second degree in special education.

Certification

Over half (58% Edu 3E) of the educators have a combination 206 (Special Education) and 202 (Elementary Education) Certification. Approximately one-third of the educators (32% Edu 3G) have Speech/Language Certification. Eight percent are certified to work with the severe and profound. Only 9% of the educators (Edu3B) have Nursery School Endorsement and 4% (Edu 3D) are certified with a combination 201 (Nursery School Endorsement) and 206 (Special Education) Certification.

Approximately 50% of the administrators (Admin 3H) have Administrator Certification. Over one-third of the administrators (37% Admin 3A) have Special Education Certification. Two-thirds of the administrators (69% Admin 3C) have Elementary Education Certification and 6% (Admin 3) have the Nursery School Endorsement.

Over two-thirds (67% Admin 6A) of the administrators have no formal training in Early Childhood Education. Less than 31% of the administrators have formal training in Early Childhood Special Education.

Experience

Nineteen percent (Edu 1A) of the educators have had more than three years experience teaching children birth through two years of age with special needs, and 9% (Edu 2B) have had experience teaching children without special needs birth through two years of age. Twelve percent (Edu 1B) have had more than three years experience teaching children three through five years of age with special needs, and 25% have had experience teaching children without special needs three through five years of age.

None (Edu 9NN) of the educators had student teaching experience with typically developing children birth through two years of age. Nine percent (Edu9QQ) of the educators had student teaching experience with children birth through two years of age, who had special needs. Fifteen percent (Edu900) of the educators had student teaching experience with typically developing children three through five years of age. Over one-third (38% Edu 9RR) of the educators had student teaching experience with children with special needs three through five years of age.

Continuing Education/Professional Associations

Over half of the educators (62% Edu 6) have taken greater than six credits beyond their degree. Eighty-six percent (Edu 8A) want further training pertaining to children with special needs birth through two years of age. Ninety-six percent (Edu 8B) want further training pertaining to children with special needs three through five years of age. Close to two-thirds (62% Edu 7) reported they have had little or no in-service training in the area of early childhood special education.

One-fourth (Edu 10A-10E) of the educators belong to some type of a professional organization. Forty-two percent (Edu10B) of the educators belong to the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA).

Over one-half (Admin 8A-8H) of the administrators belong to some type of professional organization. Nearly one-half (42% Admin 8H) belong to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Pay Scale

The base pay for Early Childhood Special Education teachers, who have had five years of experience, ranged from a low of \$14,400 to a high of \$19,358 (Edu 18A). The mean salary for Early Childhood Special Education teachers in South Dakota is \$16,672.

Current Practices

Curriculum

Less than one-half (48% Edu 31A) of the educators in center-based programs are using a curriculum of any type. Less than one-fourth (22% Admin 82A) of the home-based programs are using a curriculum. Twenty-two percent (Edu 31B) of the programs are using a teacher designed curriculum and 16% are using a commercial curriculum. The remainder are using a combination of curriculums and some use the South Dakota Preschool Curriculum.

Program Criteria

Over one-half (54% Admin 14) of the administrators reported that they have written objectives for their early childhood special education programs and services.

Only 25% (Admin 61A) reported that they had specific written eligibility criteria for children with special needs birth through two years of age. Thirty-one percent of the administrators (Admin 62B) reported that they had specific written eligibility criteria for children with special needs three through five years of age. A large majority (95% Admin 22A) reported they have written criteria for their Child Find activities, 86% (Admin 22B) have written criteria for their screening process, 41% (Admin 39E) have written procedures for borderline cases, 63% (Admin 22C) have written criteria for prescreening, 67% (Admin 22D) have written criteria for referral decisions, 77% (Admin 22E) have written criteria for placement in the program, 64% (Admin 22F) have written criteria for integration, 83% (Admin 22G) have written criteria for the multidisciplinary evaluation, 57% (Admin 22H) have written exit criteria, 73% (Admin 22I) reported they have written program/service objectives, 69% (Admin 22G) have written criteria for parental involvement, 52% (Admin 22J) have written criteria for transitions, and 54% (Admin 22I) have written criteria for follow-up, once a child has left a program.

Parental Involvement

A little over 10% (Edu 25) have more than six days per month release time for parental contact per month. Over one-third (39% Edu 25) reported that they have less than one day of release time for parental contact per month.

Over half of the programs loan toys (60% Edu 38E) and nearly three-fourths of the programs loan books and teaching materials (72% Edu 38F). Twenty-four percent (Edu 38M) have respite care services available in their communities for the

families. Nearly one-third of the programs (29% Edu 380) hold educational meetings for parents and 31% (Edu 38K) provide parent training.

Fifteen percent (Edu 26A) address family strengths, 40% (Edu 26B) address family concerns, and 33% (Edu 26C) address family goals.

Monitoring

Over one-third (39% Edu 32) of the educators monitor their children with special needs several times a week. Nineteen percent (Edu 32) monitor their children two to three times a month. Forty-five percent (Edu 32) monitor the children in their classroom on a monthly basis or less.

Case Management

Nearly one-third of the programs have case managers for the children birth through two years of age with special needs (30% Admin 49A) and for the children three through five years of age with special needs (33% Admin 49B). Only five percent (Admin 51) have formal written procedures for case managers. For those programs that have case managers (Admin 50), 28% have the Early Childhood Special Education teacher, 25% have the Special Education Coordinator, and 16% have a combination of the two as the case manager. Only 14% (Admin 54) have interagency councils that assist in the case management process.

Support Staff

Many of the programs contract with cooperatives or private individuals for support staff. Forty-four percent (Admin 20AB) of the programs hire a psychologist, 26% (Admin 20AC) hire an audiologist, 37% (Admin 20AD) hire an

occupational therapist, 32% (Admin 20AE) hire a physical therapist, 38% (Admin 20AF) hire the community health nurse, 42% (Admin 20AG) hire a school nurse, 7% (Admin 20AI) hire a social worker, and 77% (Admin 20AJ) hire a speech therapist.

For those programs that have to contract for services, well over half (Edu 17A-17G) of the programs reported that the services are either not available or they are available, but not quickly. The Speech/Language Therapists were the only service providers reported to be readily available (99% Edu 17G).

Barriers

Administrators reported (Admin 92A and 92B) that there was insufficient money (69%) and insufficient staff (69%) to provide the needed services for children with special needs birth through five years of age. Sixty-two percent (Admin 92C) reported that there was a lack of appropriate facilities. Fifty-seven percent (Admin 92F) reported that there was a lack of time to work in coordination with other programs and services and 52% (Admin 92I) reported there was a lack of qualified staff to provide the services.

APPENDIX G:

TABLES

Table G-1. Percentage of educators by degree providing opportunities for parental involvement activities

Parental Involvement Type	Degree (%)				
	Child Development	Elementary	Special Ed	Dual (Elem & Spec Ed)	Speech/Language
Parent training workshops $X^2(5, \underline{n}=105)=50.15, p<.0001$	56	40	20	47	6
Educational meetings for parents $X^2(5, \underline{N}=106)=52.10, p<.0001$	44	20	40	37	10
Respite care $X^2(5, \underline{N}=106)=55.78, p<.0001$	22	50	40	30	3
Loan toys $X^2(5, \underline{N}=106)=81.94, p<.0001$	67	60	80	76	29
Parent-teacher conferences $X^2(5, \underline{N}=106)=55.24, p<.0001$	89	80	100	91	100
Support group meetings for parents $X^2(5, \underline{N}=106)=56.52, p<.0001$	11	40	40	35	3